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## Kritis of Thyagaraja—A Study

By

S. PARTHASARATHY

*A new planet is of less moment to me than a new reading of an old line*

—James Agate

Some time ago a seminar was held under the auspices of the Music Department of the Madras University in which various types of musical compositions were mentioned. Kritis as a form of musical composition naturally came in for discussion and attempts were made to define it although no final decision emerged. The compositions of Sri Thyagaraja Swami have been known as Kritis and it is interesting to see how varied they are in structure and content as against the pieces of Dikshitar or Syama Sastri.

## Theme Development

Usually a Kritis consists of a pallavi, anupallavi and charana. Thyagaraja has given us quite a number of pieces of this type. He has generally followed a method in dividing the contents among the three parts of a Kritis. The pallavi makes a general enunciation, the anupallavi is a particular enunciation and the charana elaborates on the theme. To take an example, in the Kapinarayani Kritis "Sarasa sama dana", the pallavi says that "there is no equal to you, Rama, in the art of handling a situation in the accepted four ways - sama, dana, bheda and danda." The anupallavi mentions Ravana in particular, a great Siva-bhakta, who did not realise this trait of Rama. The charana goes into the details how soft words of persuasion were first used, then the offer of Ayodhya was made to Ravana, the brothers got separated and ultimately

violence had to be used to get rid of him. Such instances are in plenty and make an interesting study.

## Charanas

Then there are Kritis with more than one charana, all in the same musical setting. "Bhava nutha" in Mohana is an example. There are some Kritis with charanas set to different dhatu, "Enduku" (Harikhambhoji), "Sri Raghuvara" (Bhairavi), "Rama Daivama" (Surati), "Ninnu vina" (Todi), "Nee pada pankaja" (Begada) are examples. The Divya-nama Kritis have only a pallavi followed by charanas in the same dhatu. The Kambhoji Kritis "Sri Raghuvara aprameya" is set in the form of a simple Swarajati with a pallavi and charanas of differing dhatu which are sung as swara and sahitya successively. It is a pity this piece has been unnecessarily made to look like a long composition complicated by sangatis which do not fit in.

## The Pancharatna Kritis

The pancharatna Kritis have the structure of tana varnams with a pallavi and charana made up of swara-sahitya similar to the ethukadai swaras in a Varna as we know it. But even so the five pieces are not uniformly structured. Only in the Arabhi Kritis "Sadinchene" do we find the swara-sahitya based on the charana line "Samayaniki". In the other four (Nata, Gaula, Varali and Sri) the

swara-sahitya are related to the pallavis respectively. Another interesting thing is that they have groupings of tana phrases. Except the Nata piece the other four have an anubandha, distinct from the ethu-kadai portion, which is sung only as sahitya. A Kriti is usually understood to have a dhatu for the pallavi, another for anupallavi while the charana is made up of the these two dhatus.

#### A Master Craftsman

Thyagaraja, the master craftsman has given us an endless variety departing from the routine, from a simple kriti which any child can repeat easily to a long Kriti purposefully elaborated with sangatis which can put a Vidwan to the test. Thyagaraja has given us a treasure. In fact sangatis have a place in some Kritis but sangatis can be out of place, on the pattern introduced by the modern innovators.

Thyagaraja is not known to have composed chitta swaras. Those sung in the concerts now have been composed and added by later day vidwans. Dikshitar has given us chitta swaras for some Kritis of his while Syama Sastri has composed swara-sahitya appendages. Thyagaraja, like Dikshitar, has a madhyama kala passage in the charanas of some Kritis. A few examples are "Dorakuna" (Bilahari), "Darini Thelisikonti" in Suddha Saveri, "Saranu Saranu (Madhyamavathi) and "Baala Baalendu" (Riti Gaula). The Thillaisthanam version of the Begada Kriti "Nee pada pankaja" has a swara-sahitya appendage to the anupallavi. It is a solitary, single instance.

#### Desadi Tala

Dikshitar has used all the seven main talas (Dhruva, Matya, Rupaka, Jhampa, Thripata, Ata and Eka) and Syama Sastri has specialised in misra chapu. Thyagaraja has been unique in handling the

Desadi tala which is popular in Harikatha. Unfortunately, the beauty of this tala has not been appreciated and vidwans have gone out of the way to change it to Adi tala with the 'eduppu' after one and half beats. Tisra nadai (adi tala) is absent in Dikshitar, but is noticeable with Thyagaraja and Syama Sastri. While theoretically any chathusra rupaka tala piece can be rendered in tisra nadai adi tala, not all will be found appropriate or will sail smoothly.

Thyagaraja could well be called the musical messenger of God to preach the theme of attaining moksha through the sweet 'marga' of sangita combined with bhakti. The bunch of Kritis referring to the greatness of nada and sangita, the list of those who had shone as nadopasakas, what a Kriti is, unique with Thyagaraja.

#### Poetic Richness

Even for those interested in poetic imagery, Thyagaraja stands supreme. The ways in which he has used rhyme in the beginnings of a line or in the ends must be read and listened to for sheer enlightenment and enjoyment. Here is one example of each:

"Sankara Karunakara Nis-  
Sankara dhrutasara bhakta va-  
Sankara danujahara Nis-  
Sanka rasika Thyagaraja"  
(Deva Rama Rama)

"Bhakta paradheenudanutsu parama-  
Bhagavatula Chevinti  
Vyaktarupudai balikina mutsata  
Yuktamanutsu konti  
Saktikala mahadevudu neevani  
Santoshamuto nunti....."  
(Evari mata)

#### Modes & Sahitya

But the most enchanting aspect of his Kritis is the simple and yet the touching manner in which he has used ragas to depict the mood of the sahitya. Kritis are the outpourings of a bhakta. (To some extent, we see this emotional outburst in Syama Sastri. His "Mayamma" in Ahiri is a wonderful creation) A bhakta prays to God with all sincerity and without any material gain in view. He gets a vision and jumps with joy. The divine light vanishes plunging him in gloom. He introspects and wonders if his prayer was not completely sincere, he immerses himself again in contemplation and gets rewarded.

All these moods of devotees are so brilliantly portrayed in his Kritis that they can be understood only if they are sung

well with a sharp eye on the sahitya. How he has used the same raga to depict more than one mood and how he has utilised different ragas to depict one mood is a marvel. Imagine different ragas (Sankarabharana, Kedaragowla, Harikambhoji), besides Nilambari, being used for 'laali' and all of them giving a swinging movement!

Thyagaraja is a treasurehouse for a bhakta as much as for one groping to find the secrets of sangita. His songs on 'Rama nama mahima' alone can engage one all the hours of the day. Let us try and understand him well, drink deep from the eternal spring and see that nothing is done to tarnish the wealth he has bequeathed to us.

## 'Sangitha Kalanidhi' Embar Vijayaraghavachariar

### Music Academy's 56th Music Conference

In 1920, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer presided at a Harikatha Kalakshepam by that colossus, Mahakathaka Kanteetava Chidambara Bhagavathar and observed "Kalakshepam would bring Kshema to the country." The same Harikatha exponent in his learned address at the Madras session of the Indian National Congress (December, 1927) had this theme as his thesis, in an apparent attempt to live down the pejorative implication of the description ('Kala & Kshepam' meanig 'pot-boiler'). The Madras Music Academy has paid its own obeisance to this great art

by choosing Kirtana Kulasekhara, Gita Katha Pravina Sri Embar Vijayaraghavachariar, to preside over its 56th Annual Music Conference in December 1982. The last occasion when a similar honour was conferred upon a Harikatha exponent was to Sir Mangudi Chidambara Bhagavathar himself in 1937.

#### Fine Heritage

Embar succeeded to a brilliant heritage. His father Sri Chidambaram Srirangachariar, was a great scholar and his

grand father Embar Varadachariar, was a contemporary of Gopalakrishna Bharathiar and a scholar with impressive gifts of voice and depth of learning. Embar is almost the last in that great tradition of Kalakshepa performers — Krishna Bhagavathar (1847-1903), the pioneer in this field with phenomenal powers of singing, exposition and personality, followed by the galaxy consisting of Brahmasri Marudanallur Swamigal, Nammeli Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, Manamerkudi Venkatachala Bhagavathar, Andamin Sivarama Bhagavathar, Tirupayanam Panchapagesa Sastriyar and in our own times, the late Gayanapatu Smt. C. Saraswathi Bai, Annaswami Bhagavathar of Tiruvaiyaru and others.

#### Well Equipped

Embar Vijayaraghavachariar who is now 73 is a double Siromani in Vedanta and Sahitya (College of Oriental Arts, Chidambaram.). He has studied up to Matriculation, is a proficient scholar in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Marathi. For over 50 years, he has enthused audiences with his Kalakshepams on both Vaishnavite and Saivite themes, besides learned discourses on the Musical Trinity, Ramakrishna Paramahansa etc. A sharp musical instinct, wry sense of humour and scholarship enable him to extract interest and illumination even from hum-drum themes, yet his deep learning sits lightly upon him. He has regaled members of the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha on innumerable occasions, with his enjoyable discourses and lambent wit.

Respectful felicitations to Embar on the rare honour which is all the more

resplendent. for being accorded once only in a generation, We wish him health and happiness.

#### Inauguration

The inaugural function held on 19th December 1982, was as usual, serious and serene. Shri R. Venkataraman, Defence Minister, Central Government, urged that a well-thought out work on Carnatic music, its growth and development be undertaken by the Academy, besides publication of a consolidated edition of the Kritis of great composers. The late Rangaramanuja Iyengar did essay both the tasks. He was certainly inspired by the very idea in his monumental works viz., "History of South Indian Music", "KRITIMANIMALAI" [volumes etc. It was his intention to undertake a more comprehensive and deeper study of our music and he had approached an established, cultural institution for facilities and assistance. That was not forthcoming and the veteran musicologist had to give up the idea.

Shri K. R. Sundaram Iyer, the Academy President, spoke of the Academy's intention to produce a set of Cassettes based on teaching methodology and Shri C. V. Narasimhan's gift of sophisticated gadgetry for recording music, that would enable musicians and students to listen to tapes of quality music. It is good that the Academy is expanding the gamut of its activities to start Harikatha classes. But as Shri T. S. Parthasarathy pointed out, promotion of the teaching of Harikatha was not easy, as public demand for the art is on the wane.

## "Kanakana Ruchira . . . . ."

(Sri Thyagaraja's Pancharathna Kriti in Varali raga).

By

E.N. PURUSHOTHAMAN

#### Introductory Note

This is a panegyric on Sri Rama by one of his most ardent devotees, who was a triveni of vaajnmaya, vedhaantha and sangeetha. Kamban, the Kavichakravarthi, Tulasidas and Ramadas are the other great devotees of Rama, who come to my mind at the moment. "Kana Kana Ruchi" is a cascade of mellifluous words which flow with spontaneous ease and grace, rippling with charming alliterations and phrases. Dhinadhinamunu, manasuna chanuvuna, apaaramahima, kalakalamanu, mukhakala galigina, vimukaambudharapavana, vidheha maanasavipaara, maanisagunamka, mukhajithakumudhahitha, are picturesque expressions which have sprung from the very heart of this saintsinger,

when he was in an ecstasy of beholding the enchanting figure of his Ishta Devatha, standing before him, as it were. Rama is the embodiment of the highest ideal of physical, mental and moral beauty. Surprisingly, Thyagaraja has called Rama as Sundaresa, a name given to Lord Siva, generally.

#### Celestial witnesses

One interesting feature in this song is that Thyagaraja has invoked so many celestials as his witnesses. I believe this is one of our traditions. I wonder whether this is only a form of asseveration or whether there is any significance in it!

#### TRANSLITERATION

Kanakana ruchira kanakavasana, ninu	" Kana "
Dhinadhinamunu manasuna chanuvuna, ninnu,	" Kana "
Paalugarumomuna Sriyapaaramahima dhanaru, ninnu,	" Kana "
Kalakalamanu Mukhakalagaligina Sita	
Kulukuchu Nora Kannulanu jooche ninnu	" Kana "
Baalaarkabhasuchela manimaya	
Maalaalamkrutha Kandhara Sarasijaaksha varaka	
Pola suruchirakireetadhara sathathambu manasaaraga,	" Kana "
Saathnimaathayou suruchiche karnasoolamainamaata veenula	
Churukkana thaalaka Sri Harini dhyaaninchi Sukimpagaledha, yatu,	" Kana "
Mrugamadhalalaamasubhanitala vara jataayu mokshapaladha	
Pavamaanasuthudu needhu mahhima dhelipa Sita thelisi valachi	

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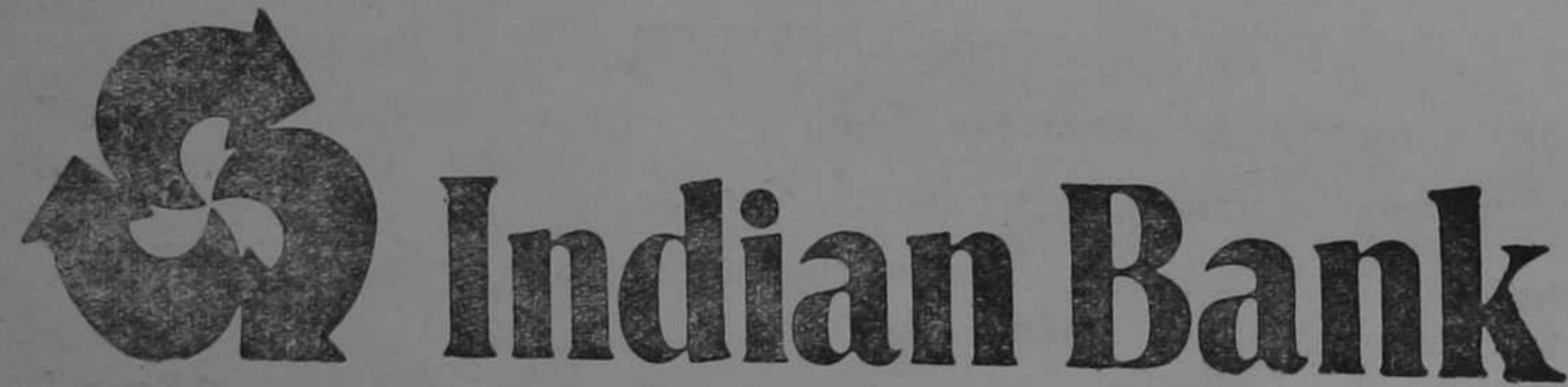
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Sokkaledhaa reethi, ninnu, " Kana "  
Sukaaspadha vimukhambudharapavana vidnehamaanasa  
Vihaaraapthasurabhoja maanithgunaamka chidhaanandha  
Khagathuranga dhrutha rathanga paramadhayaakara  
Karunaarasa varunaaiaaya Bhayaapaharaa, Sri Raghupathe, " Kana "  
Kaaminchi Premameera karamula needhu Paadhakamalamula  
Bathukonuvadu saakshi. Ramanaamarasikudu, Kailasa  
Sadhanudu saakshi. Mariyu Naradha Paraasara Sukasounaka  
Purandhara Nagajadharaja saakshi gadha ?  
Sundharesa, Sukhakalaambudhi vasaasrithulake. " Kana "  
Sathathamu Premapoorithadagu Thyagaraja  
Nutha mukhajitha kumudhahitha varadha ninnu, " Kana "

**TRANSLATION.**

More and more I see, see you, I mean golden robed, more and " More "  
more I pine,  
Day in and day out, in the intimacy of my mind, " More "  
Your tender face glowing with lustrous boundless glory, " More "  
Gay and gleeful Sita, throwing at you a sidelong glance, beauty " More "  
sparkling on her face,  
Radiant like the rising Sun, clad in fine clothes,  
A necklace of priceless gems glittering around the neck,  
With lotus eyes, lovely cheeks, a kireetam dazzling on the head,  
All the time and with all my heart, " More "  
The sharp ear-piercing words of his stepmother, Suruchi,  
Unable to bear, did he not seek Sri Hari and secure His grace, " More "  
similarly,  
With the fragrant musk dotted on your proportioned forehead,  
Giver of moksha to the blessed Jataayu,  
Did not Sita swell with an ecstasy of love,  
On hearing Hanuman recount your majestic splendour,  
in the same way " More "  
Abode of joy, dispeller of inimical clouds,  
Rambler in the minds of Mukthas who had subdued their physical selves,  
Kalpavruksha for the devoted, wearing signs of adorable virtues,  
Dweller in bliss, rider on Garuda, bearer of chakra,

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fear, Lord of Raghu's race,

“ More ”

Who was holding your lotus feet in his hands,  
Longing for you with over-flowing love, he is a witness.

The Lord of the Kailas. who delights in reciting your name,  
He is a witness. Besides, Naaradha, Paraasara, Sukha, Sounaka,  
Purandhara, Nagaja, Dharaja, these  
Exalted beings, are they not also witnesses ?

O Lord of beauty, dweller in the ocean of bliss, for the seekers,

“ More ”

Adored by Thyagaraja, who is ever filled with love,  
Endowed with a face that is lovelier than the moon,  
O gratifier of desires,

“ More ”

## Poetic Genius

'Kanakana ruchira' is a flash. How  
else can we describe it? It is a stroke of  
poetic genius : delectable, inimitable,  
untranslatable. It is a mixed metaphor,  
like drinking with the eyes. 'Kana' is seeing  
with eyes. 'Ruchi' is tasting with the  
tongue, in common parlance. But 'ruchi'  
has many other meanings : desire, wish,  
lustre, light, splendour, beautiful etc.  
Here, it is desire, that is, longing or yearn-  
ing. I have translated it as pining,  
thinking it would be more in tune with the  
spirit of the original. A Sanskrit Professor  
has opined that Thyagaraja would have  
meant only longing, but not relishing.  
That is what I also felt and translated it as  
pining.

But the great Ramadas, who is adored  
by Thyagaraja, has used 'ruchi' in the  
sense of taste also, in one of his most  
famous songs :

'O Rama Nee Naama Memi Ruchira?'

Nadhalee karjooraadhi ppalamula  
kadhikamou.

Kammana nee naama memi ruchira

Panasa jamboodhraksha ppalarasamu-  
lakante.

Adhikamou nee naama memi ruchira

"Your name is sweeter than plantains,  
dates, grapes" etc. says the celebrated  
bhaktha Bhadracharya Rama. So we don't  
know in exactly what sense Thyagaraja  
has used it in this song. I think it can be  
interpreted in both the ways. It is equally  
delicious either way.

Kanaka : gold ; vasana : robed or  
clothed ; dhinadinamunu : day-in and  
day out ; manasuna : in the mind ; chanu-  
vuna : intimately or chummily ; paalagaaru:  
dripping milk. Paalugaaru is not to be taken  
literally, only figuratively. It means that  
Rama's face was such a tender face.  
Momuna : on the face ; Sri : lustrous ;  
apaara : boundless ; mahima : greatness ;  
dhanaru (thanaru) : glowing or shining ;  
kalakalamanu : sparkling ; mukha : facial ;  
khala : lustre ; galigina (kaligina) : having ;  
Kulukuchu : gleefully or merrily or  
joyfully.

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This is another difficult word to translate. 'Kuluku' connotes joy expressed through both body and mind, a visible rapture, if I can say so. Norakannula (orakannula): side glance; jooche (chooche): seeing; baala, arka: sun; aabha: brilliance; su: good, chela: clothed; mani, maya, maala, alankrutha, kandhara: neck, sarasijaaksha, vara. loveiy. Vara means sreshta, generally, But here as it is used for the cheeks. kapola, I have translated it as lovely. Surichira, ruchi: lustre, ruchira: lustrous;

## " Ruchi "

Please note how ruchi is used here. Su is only an enhancing prefix, of ten used without any special significance as it is used here. Kireeta, dhara: wearing, santhathambu: ever or always manasaa raga, manasu: mind, aaraga: full, here it means with all my heart; saapathni: co-wife maathayou: mother; karna, soolamu, ayina: earpiercing; maata: word; veenula: ears, churukkuna: sharply; thaalaka: unable to bear, dhyaninchi, sukhimpaga ledha: did he not attain happiness; yatu (atu): thus, mrugamadha: kasthuri, lalaama: bottu, subha: auspicious, nitala: fore-head, vara: great; ppaladha: giver; ppalamu means result or fruit, pavamana suthudu: son of Vaayu, Hanuman; needhu: your mahima; dhelipa (thelipa): recount; valachi: lovingly; sokka: ecstasy. Brown has translated this word as faintness, stupefaction, intoxication and confusion of mind. But sokka is used for trance, caused by love or joy or wonder, even in Tamil. Ledha: did it not, that is, did she not; aareethi: in that manner; sukha: happiness; aaspadha: abode; vimukha: unfavourable; ambudhara: clouds, carriers

of water; pavana: wind, the wind that dispels unfavourable or inimical clouds, (enemies); vidheha: one who has renounced the corporeal self and attained the spiritual self, a jeevanmuktha; maanasa, vihaara, aaptha: devotees; surabhooja: kalpavruksham; maanitha: reverential; guna: qualities; anka: marks or signs, of reverential qualities. This is also a brilliant phrase, maanithagunamka, extremely difficult to translate; chidhaanandha: immersed in bliss.

'Chit' means consciousness, that means, consciousness itself is bliss or bliss itself is consciousness. Therefore, immersed in bliss is more intelligible and more tangible. Khaga thuranga: rider on Garuda, having Garuda as vaahana; dhrutha: bearing; rathanga: chakra, sudharsan; parama, dhayakara; liver of dhaya. karunaarasa; varunaalaya: ocean; bhaya, apahara; destroyer; kaaminchi; iovingly; prema meera: with excelling love; karamula: hands I paadhakamalamula: lotus feet; battu konu (pattukonu) vaadu: one who holds, obviously Hanuman; sadhanudu: dweller; nagaja; Parvathi; dharaja; Sita, gaadha (gaadhaa): are they not; sukha, kalasaambudhi: ocean of bliss; vaasa: dweller; aasrithulake: seekers; sathathamu: always; prema poorithadagu; filled with love; nutha: adored.

## Alliteration

'Mukhajitha kumudha hitha' is another wonderful phrase. Look at the alliteration: jitha: conquer, kumudha-hitha: moon, friend of kumudha. Literally, it means one who has conquered the the moon's face, which seems absolute nonsense. Idiomatically, it means one who has a face lovelier than the moon, which is total excellence. That is the genius of this language; Sanskrit.

## Griffith

I am tempted to quote a few from Griffith about the reaction of Sita when Hanuman revealed his identity and disclosed his mission. It was a mixed reaction, of suspicion and assurance, as all readers know very well. Because Thyagaraja has described this scene so nicely, I wish to show how another great devotee of Ramayana, R. T. H. Griffith, who has translated not only the Vaalmeeki Ramayana but also the Vedhas, has depicted Sita in this situation.

Through all her frame the rapture ran,  
As thus again the dame began :

“ Now verily the truth I know  
of the wise saw of long ago ;  
Once only in a hundred years  
True joy to living man appears. “  
With joyous heart she heard him tell  
Of the great lord she loved so well,  
And in sweet accents, soft and low,  
Spoke half forgetful of her woe :  
“ How didst thou stand by Rama’s  
side ?

How come my lord and thou allied ?  
How meet the people of the wood  
With men on terms of brotherhood ?  
Declare each grace and regal sign



That decks the lords of Raghu’s line.  
Each circumstance and took relate :  
Tell Rama’s form and speech and  
gait “.

“ Thou bringest me “, she cried again,  
“ A mingled draught of bliss and pain  
Bliss, that he wears me in his heart,

Pain, that he works and weeps apart.”

“ Through all her frame the rapture ran “, is a memorable sentence. Griffith’s translation sparkles like this, wherever we open it.

## Varali Raga

Of the Pancharathinams, I like this most. To me, a layman, Varali is like the eel. We can’t catch it and hold it in our hand for a while. But in “Eti janmamidhi” it has pronounced features and marked effects, stirring up feelings of despair. It generally moves in madhyamasthaayi and in madhyama kaala. It touches the heart when it touches the mandharam.

“ Kana Kana Ruchi “ is, to use Goethe’s famous words, “ all by which our soul is enraptured, feasted and fed “.

## News and Notes

Every January brings us intimations of the imperishability of Saint Thyagaraja’s life and work. The feast of music in the numerous music festivals at Madras and elsewhere, punctuated largely by the bard’s compositions, the Aradhana at Tiruvaiyaru, remind the musician and the lover of music that they can still make their life sublime. His Kritis, those sincere diaries of his soul, reflect the essences of humanity, – its aspirations, regrets, tenderness, spiritual exaltation and moods and therefore, become invested with a divine secondary colour derived from ourselves. Sri Thyagaraja is thus eternally relevant. “Shanmukha” pays its homage to the Saint every year by devoting a large part of its January issue to the portrayal of some aspects of his greatness and making it a Thyago-upanishad (“Upani-Shad” meaning “to sit down near someone”) of sorts. In this January ‘83 number too, the same duty has been performed.

Anyone who ventures to write on Sri Thyagaraja, however competent, is faced with the sense of awe and humility, so picturesquely expressed by a French fisherman who said

“Oh God, Thy Sea is so great  
My boat is so small”.

No creator of poetry or music, other than Shakespeare perhaps, causes so much diffidence when one starts to write about him. Many a commentator has stretched his fastidiousness on the rack of the saint’s perfection. They have hugged exultingly their intimate appreciations, discoveries of one’s own efforts and savoured exalted

moments. But such moods have had their subsidence, too, because of the incomparable range of the Saint’s genius which no one person can fully and truly fathom. Hazlitt wrote about Shakespeare’s commentators: “If we wish to know the force of human genius we must read Shakespeare. If we wish to know the insignificance of human learning, we may study his commentators”. This might be largely true of many of the writers on Thyagaraja as well.

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## The Music of Man

When this writer was in New York recently, he had the good fortune to view on television the series on “The Music of Man” for which Yehudi Menuhin was the host and led the commentary. Curtis W. Davis was one of the three co-producers of the programme (Richard Bocking and John Thomson were the other two), while co-writers were Charles Weir and Menuhin himself. The questions to which they addressed themselves were: Why did man invent music? What is it for? What does it do for us, to us, and why? According to Davis, “Menuhin has one of the most interesting and inquiring minds in the music field. We felt that he was the most effective overall presenter..... his immediate recognizability everywhere in the world would be an asset”.

In the initial programme entitled “The Quiver of Life”, Menuhin took the viewers back to 35000 B.C., took a look at our innate awareness of sound, then examined the growth of music from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, the



evolution of operatic and Western music and the state of the musical instrument. The musical examples ranged from a Sun dance, a funeral chant, a jig for a bamboo Violin from Jamaica and a fugue from Bach's Sonata No. 3 for Violin. It was an eight-week series in one of which Menuhin and Pandit Ravi Shankar have discussed Indian classical music. The series, produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, was filmed in 27 countries and took five years to make. It is one of the most powerful documentaries of the human soul's discovery and of the development of one of the most precious assets of man viz, music. Our Doordarshan authorities will do well to approach CBC for rights to show this document to viewers in India.

#### A Discovery

When I asked Mr. C. V. Narasimhan, former U. N. Under-Secretary-General, for an appointment in his Manhattan Apartment in New York City, he readily gave me one. To meet "CVN" is to be reminded of the sloka "*Vidyaa Vinoya sampanne braahmane*" (Gita V 18) - 'humility is an essential part of true culture'.

As Rajaji observed in one of his lectures at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on "Culture", 'humility results from innate consideration and respect for others and a sense of true values'. (italics mine). In the course of our talk, CVN exhibited an old note book containing kritis, jawalis, thillanas etc written in bold characters, with the ink almost browned out, in Ramanathapuram 'Poochi' Srinivasa Iyengar's own bold hand - Salem Chellam Iyengar, son of Salem Doraiswami Iyengar, disciple of Poochi had this magnum opus - and it was CVN's unerring musical instinct that detected the gold mine. The dedicated votary of music that CVN is did not rest

until this rare manuscript was published for the benefit of posterity. It of course required to be edited with care and the job was entrusted to the able hands of Sri T. S. Parthasarathy, the eminent musicologist.

The printed book containing 55 compositions - Varnams (7) kritis (25), Jawalis (7) thillanas (12) was released by Mr. CVN himself on 22nd December 82 at the Music Academy's 56th conference. Vidwans Chellam Iyengar and B. Rajam Iyer rendered some of the compositions. Carnatic music repertoire has thus been reinforced and one hopes that a settled format will be given to these pieces soon and that they will find a place in the programmes of our Vidwans including the *avant garde*.

#### T. K. Bhagavathy

T. K. Bhagavathy's death brings the curtain down on a fine era in Tamil theatre. He and his illustrious brother, "Avvai" Shanmukham, regarded acting in plays as a total expression and embodiment of Tamil culture and their plays were true vehicles of manifestation of that spirit. "Raja Raja Chozhan", "Ratha Pasam", "Avvayyar" were examples not only of superb acting (which was not surprising since acting was in their blood) but of scrupulous regard for the canons of historical truth, moral imperatives and urbane yet telling dialogue. These were in fact their artistic credo. Inspired dilettantism had no place in their scheme of things. There was a blend of passionate commitment, culture and humility. Thiru Bhagavathy had also the duties of managing the troupe, fixing of plays, problems of logistics and other often exasperating chores any leader of a drama troupe has to contend with. His firm but kind and courteous manner endeared him to one and

all. His public relations work was superb. First in the great plays and later in the films, the brothers left an indelible stamp of their talent. To their eternal credit, it should be mentioned that they were not voracious of obvious or cheap applause and welcomed only that which was shorn of flattery and insincerity. They had a disinterested passion in giving the Tamil stage a great shot in the arm. They put the Tamil theatre on the gold standard. Their mission was eminently successful. Now they have departed in autumnal glory.

#### Indian Fine Arts Society's Golden Jubilee Conference

"Nothing sublimely artistic has ever arisen out of mere art - there must always be a rich moral soil for any great aesthetic growth" said G. K. Chesterton in one of his essays. I was reminded of this when I witnessed the Inaugural function of the 50th Conference and Music festival of the Indian Fine Arts Society, Madras. As its debonair President, Shri. Emberumanar Chetty proudly claimed in his Welcome Address, it is "a field in which infant mortality is high.....to have survived for 50 years is itself no mean achievement" and the IFAS had consistently kept "the triple object in view.....song, dance and drama".

Mr. S. L. Khurana, the Governor, who inaugurated the Conference stressed the efforts of the Centre and State Governments to promote the arts. He conferred the title of "Sangitha Kala Sikhamani" on

Sri S. Balachander, the President of the Golden Jubilee Conference of the IFAS.

With characteristic courage and frankness, Sri Balachander hit out at the fall in standards of music reviews in his inaugural address. He pilloried the so-called music critics for lacking genuine know-how and character, and observed that "the genuine and knowledgeable reviewers are outnumbered by a tribe of riff-raff".

Apart from arranging concerts of music and dance, this year the IFAS has arranged a brilliant series of demonstrations and lectures covering the whole gamut of music and dance, by leading personalities like Srivanchiyam Ramachandra Iyer (Simhanandana Pallavi), S. K. Rajarathinam (Varnam in Bharatham), Puducottah Mahadevan (Morsing), Dr. S. Ramanathan (Swaraprastharas), Kudanthai Jayaraman (Muga Nayanam), T. Rukmini (the Role of Violin in concerts), S. Balachander (Veena), Madurai Krishna Iyengar (Thillanas), Smt. Nirmala Ramachandran, (Padams and Jawalis), S. R. Janakiraman (Allied Ragas), K. Rangarajan (Purandara's Padams), Maharajapuram Santhanam (Compositions on Lord Ayyappan) etc. The fare was so rich, so varied and so captivating that it attracted hundreds of rasi kas high and low every morning. Sri Balachander's comments on each presentation shed further light on them, showing his versatility and unique ability to marshal his musical experiences.

No praise can be too much for the untiring efforts of Sri N. Ramachandran,

the Secretary, and his colleagues for the excellent arrangements made by them. And Mr. Emberumanar was a picture of grace and courtesy.

### SRI KRISHNA GANA SABHA

The presence of two Central Cabinet Ministers of proven competence, the convening of a second Natya Kala Conference following on the success of the first and last but not least, the dazzling music and dance programme for the 27th Art Festival and Pongal Dance Festival of the Sri Krishna Gana Sabha made the inaugural proceedings a shining hour in the Sabha's glowing history. Sri N. K. P. Salve, the Minister for I & B. is as good a speaker as a Chartered Accountant and in a brief speech, assured all support for the arts and the classical tradition's maintenance. Sri V. P. Sathe, Minister for Chemicals, congratulated Kumari Shoba Naidu on receiving the birudu "Nrittya Choodamani" and in a thoughtful speech, stressed that our country has to be very proud of its

classical arts, as they help national integration. He described Bharata the author of Natya Sastra, as a seer who combined art with science and philosophy.

Dr. Padma Subramanyam explained the scope of the Natya Kala Conference, with its motto of 'Unity in diversity' for reducing the gap between theory and practice. She stressed that the new features of this Conference were discussions on interdisciplinary studies of dance styles, link of dance with martial arts, classical ballet, even chinese opera, use of dance in films, the art of mridangam for dance. This time both the Bhulabhai Institute and the University of Madras, were cosponsoring the conference. She attributed the success in planning so heavy and conspicuous a programme to the dynamic enthusiasm of Mr. R. Yagnaraman, the Hon. Secretary. Indeed, the manner in which the inauguration drill was gone through was slick, showing his quiet mastery over men and matters.

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## The Music that Thyagaraja Cherished

By

(E. N. PURUSHOTHAMAN)

On this great occasion, I wish to pay my homage to the ardent devotees of Thyagaraja in our own time, like Bangalore Nagarathnam, Sriman K.V. Srinivasa Ayyangar, who wrote the "Thyagaraja Hrudayam", Prof. P. Sambamoorthy, who spent all his life on Thyagaraja, and Doctor Thillaisthanam Srinivasa Raghavan, who was a rigorous guardian of the authentic style as handed down by Thyagaraja himself through his direct disciples. There are many more devotees, but I hold these four in greater reverence. Of these four, Bangalore Nagrathnamma shines like a single star in her solitary glory. She offered herself as an oblation to Thyagaraja and died at his feet. I had the good fortune to meet her just two days before her *nirvana* and I still preserve the lime fruit she gave me with her blessings. "This fruit won't perish" she said and it has not perished. Thirty years have passed now.

### Great Exponent

Thyagaraja's compositions on music are unique and they are among the very best of his compositions. No other composer has created such ennobling pieces, to my knowledge. Some poets have written some lyrics on the charms of music, but not musicians. Thyagaraja's compositions on music can be defined as Music on Music. He is not merely a great composer and a great singer, he is also a great expositor of the philosophy of music and a great preceptor of the Art and Science of music. He treated music as divine.

There are about twenty keerthanams on this theme. I have tried to analyse them according to their contents.

### Divine Birth

Music was born from the five faces of Siva: Sadhyojaatha, Aghora, Tathpurusaa, Eessana, and Vaamadheva. According to Sriman Kalluri Veerabhadra Sastry, a commentator on Thyagaraja (in Telugu), all the Saphthaswaras are born from every face of Siva at different sthaayis: Anumandhara in Sadhyojaatha; Mandhara in Aghora, Madhyama in Thathpurusha, Thaara in Eesaana and Athithaara in Vaamadheva. 'SADHYOJAATHADHI PANCHAVAKTHRAJA' says Thyagaraja. That is, Sadhyojaatha, Aadhi, Pancha, Vakthra, ja. 'Aadhi' means etcetera. 'Vakthra' means face. 'Ja' means born. Born of five faces ('NAADAATHANU MANISAM' in Chittharanjani).

### Out of Air & Fire

Music is born from the combination of air and fire, "PRAANAANALA SAMYOGAMUVALLA PRANAVA NAADHAMU SAPHASWARAMULAI BARAGA" ("MOKSHAMUGALADHAA"): (Saaramathi). 'Praana' means air. 'Anala' means fire. 'Samyogamu' means union. 'Valla' means as a result of. Pranavanaadhamu, Saphthaswaramulu, i means becoming, 'Baraga' is Paraga. 'Paraga' means flourished. By the conjunction of Praana and Anala, Pranavanaadha burst into saphthaswaras. Here, there is a hidden meaning which takes us by surprise, when it is revealed to us. According to our mythology, Agni has seven tongues and is also, therefore, called Saphthajihva. These saphthajihvas have turned into saphthaswaras. What a flash of creative genius

this is : There are so many flashes like this in Thyagaraja.

### From the Corporeal Body

Music is born from our corporeal body itself. D H E H O D H B H A V A M B A G U N A A D H A M U L D H I V Y A M O U P R A N A V A A - K A A R A N A N E ('VARARAGA LAYAJNULU: Chenchukambhoji). On the face of it, it looks as though we have fallen from the sublime to the ridiculous, from the divine faces of Lord Siva to the vile bodies of the mortals, prone to evil, prey to all ills, both physical and mental and doomed to decay and death. But the mortal body is also a temple in which the soul is enshrined. It is the 'Kshethra'.

It is from Moolaadhaara Chakra that Sabdha first arises as Sabdhabrahman, in its inaudible, Anaahatha form. When transferred to the vocal organ, it takes the audible, aahatha form. Sabdhabrahman is the Paraashakthi of speech. Moolaadhaara is the sanctuary of kundalini and kundalini is the source of all Sound. It is by meditating on kundalini that man becomes Lord of learning and speech. The three vital "naadis", I da, Pingala and Sushumna, sprout from the Moolaadhaara. Of these three, the 'Sushumna' is the embodiment of Pranava. Thyagaraja says, "MOOLAADHAARAJA NAADHA-MERUGUTE MUDHAMAGU MOKSHAMURA". ('SWARARAGASUDHA') Sankarabharam). To know the 'naadha' that is born of Mooladhaara is Joyful Moksha. Mudhamu is a beautiful word.

### Divine Growth

When we hear the names of the great saints and seers who were all ardent devotees of music, we are astounded. Many of us have not even heard many of the names of these celestial singers. Why not institutions like the Music Academy

and Kalakshethra set up their own research centres and excavate the rich spiritual lore that lies buried under the colossal debris of ignorance, negligence, indifference and complacency? When I read the monumental works of those Rishis from the West like Max Mueller, Monier Williams, Ralph Griffith, Arthur Ryder, Douglas Hill and Franklin Edgerton and see to what depths they have delved into our scriptures, I feel deeply ashamed. It hurts my national pride. Our ignorance about ourselves is sometimes unbelievable. It is of Himalayan proportions. Music is no exception.

### Nadoposakas

Now let us go round this glorious constellation of nadhopaasakas. It is sangeetha guruparampara. Bhringi, Nandheesa, Sameeraja (Hanuman), Ghataja (Agasthya), Mathanga, Naaradhadhulu (SANGEETAJNAANAMU BHAKTHI VINA : Dhanyasi). Kamala, Gowri, Vageeswari, Vidhi (Brahma), Garudadhwaaja, Siva, Naaradhulu, Amaresa, Bharatha, Kaasyapa, Chandeesa, Anjaneya, Guha, Gajamukhulu; Mrukundaja, Kumbhaja, Thumburu, Vara Someswara, Sarangadeva, Nandhi, Pramukulaku. 'VIDHULAKU MROKKEDHA' : Maayaa Maalavagowla). Sasivibhakara (Chandra and Surya). Sana-kasanandhana, Dhigeesa, Surakimpurusha, Kanakakasipusutha (Praladha) Naradha Thumburu, Pavanasoona (Anjaneya), Balachandradhara, Suka, Sarojabhava, Bhoosuravarulu, Paramapaavanulu, Ghanulu, Saasvathulu, Kamalabhavasukhamu, Sadhaanubhavulu, Gaaka (ENDHARO MAHAANUBAAVULANDHARIKI VAN-DHANAMU: Sri ragam). This is a great galaxy of seers and singers. Some names are repeated, because I don't want to interfere with the text. 'Gaaka', the last word in the last quotation is a wonderful usage. Generally, it has a prefix, 'idhi-

gaaka' or 'adhigaaka', meaning besides this or besides that. Denuded of the prefix, it is so attracting. We instinctively pause on the word in delightful surprise. This is artistry.

### The Thirumoorthys are Nadopasakas

Thyagaraja has often described the Thirumoorthys also as nadhopaasakas.

NAADHOPAASANACHE SANKARA  
NAARAYANA VIDHULU VELASIRI O  
MANASA

It was by performing penance for naadha that Siva, Vishnu and Brahma flourished, O Mind!

VEDHODHDHANULU VEDAATHEETHULU  
VISVAMELLA NINDI YUNDEVARALU

They are the ones who nourished and sustained the Vedhas, who even transcended the Vedhas. They are the ones who pervade the entire universe.

MANTHRAATHMULU YANTHRA  
THANTHRAATHMULU MARI MA  
NVAMTHRAMU LENNO GALAVAA-  
RALU

THANTHI LAYA SWARA  
GAANAVIDHULURU

THYAGARAJAVAMDHYULU  
SVATHAMTHRULU

They are abodes of manthraas, Yanthraas and Manthrams. Besides, they last for several 'manvanthraas', that is, lakhs and lakhs of years. They revel both in vocal and instrumental music. They are worshipped by Thyagaraja. They are self-existing ones. Uncreated. The word 'Mari' in the first line is another beautiful stroke.

Manvanthra is the length of the reign of one Manu, which runs to lakhs of years. Manthraas, yanthraas and Thanthraas are totally alien to us in the South who are largely followers of Vedhaantha. Thyagaraja wants to tell us that even those creeds emanate from the Lord only.

The intent is, in spite of being so omnipotent, the Thirumoorthys thrived only by naadhopaasana. Conversely, music also flourished only by the upaasana of Gods and seers. So it had a divine growth.

### Divine Abode

The purport of the Gita and the delight of sangeetha, you see in yourself, O Mind! "GEETHARTHAMU SANGEETHA NANDHAMU NEE THAAVUNA JOODARAA O MANASAA" (Surati) Thyagaraja has addressed about thirty-three songs to his mind. Where is his mind? His mind is but within himself. Nay, his mind is only himself. Mind is the Man, said Bacon. So, it is the mind speaking to the mind. Or Thyagaraja speaking to Thyagaraja. The dialogue that goes on in one's own mind is of absorbing interest. But I am not the one to speak about the mind. It is far beyond my depths.

### True Music of the Mind

'Geetharthamu' is one of the most popular compositions of Thyagaraja. But if we study it seriously, it is not as sweet and simple as it sounds. We use the word 'mind' very casually without knowing what it really is. What is the music that we can see in our own mind? Is it the layers and layers of the impressions that hundreds of concerts I had heard had left behind in my mind? I can easily recall just now the Thodi that I heard from Rajaratnam over four decades

ago. Is this not music in my mind? It is. This is how a common man may understand this song.

But is this the music that Thyagaraja meant? No. It is the music inherent in myself, the music that Shakespeare meant when he said "He that hath no music in himself..." It is the Naadha Brahman that abides in us, like the Absolute Brahman. It is not heard, because it is merged in the mind itself. This is the music that Thyagaraja meant.

Where else does it reside?

NAABHIHRUTHKANTARASANA  
NAASAADHULAYANDHU  
DHARARUKSAAMAADHULALO  
VARA GAYATHRI HRUDHAYAM-  
UNA  
SURABAOOSURA MAANA-  
SAMUNA SUBHA THYAGARA-  
JUNI EDA ('SOBILLU SAPTHA-  
SWARA' : Jaganmohini)

#### The Terrestrial Level

On the terrestrial level, music blooms at the navel, at the heart, at the throat, on the tongue, at the nose and in the minds of brahmanas. At the celestial level, music blossoms with splendour in the Rig Vedha, Sama Vedha and other Vedhas, in the heart of the sacred Gayathri manthra, in the minds of dhevaas and in Lord Siva himself. These are the abodes of music.

The pallavi of this song, "SOBILLU SAPTHASWARA SUNDHARALA BRAJIMPAVE", though not relevant here, is too inviting MANASAA to be passed over. If we can imagine, as Thyagaraja could, the lustrous swaras taking lovely forms, what a great joy it would be!

Here is something even more captivating.

RANJIMPAJESEDU RAGAMBULU  
MANJULAMAGU NAVATHAA-  
RAMU LETTHI  
MANJEERMU GHALLANI NATI-  
NCHU  
MAHIMA DHELIVU THYAGARA-  
JANUTHUDAGU (SRIPAPRIYA  
SANGEETHOPAASANA' : Attana).

Lord of Lakshmi, who is adored by Thyagaraja, knows the grandeur of rapturous ragas taking bewitching forms and dancing, with their anklet bells jingling. This dazzles the imagination itself! Something fantastic as they often say nowadays.

#### Divine Content

The content of music is Vedhantha. That is the real glory of Thyagaraja. "SRINAAYAKAAKHILA N A I G A M A A SRITH SANGEETHAJNANANAMU BRAHMAANANDHA SAAGARA" ('AANANDHASAAGARA'-Garudadhvani)

Srinaayaka is a rare name for Vishnu. It is so fine. Sangeethajnaana, in which all the vedhas have sought their abode, is an ocean of Supreme bliss. What wonderful imagery! Look at this long *Samasam* 'Srinaayakaakhilanaigamaasritha sangeethajnanamanu'. There are many lengthy 'samaasams' like this in Thyagaraja keerthanams. It is difficult even to read them as prose. How Thyagaraja could infuse such delicious music into them and also give them a facile and sometimes a fascinating expression is the wonder of it!

#### Music A Pillar of the Vedhas

'Aasritha' means 'seek a place to stay or seek one's support'. The Vedhas have sought a place in Sangeethajnaanamu, which is the ocean of supreme bliss. The chanting of the Vedhas, with correct intonation and modulation, is far more

plifting to the soul than the rendering of any music! No comparison, I dare say. There can't be two opinions about this. Then, let us imagine for a moment, what influence the Vedhas could have exercised on us down these thousands of years, had they been devoid of their enchanting rhythmic cadences, God knows! The Creator who gave us the Vedhas had realised that unless he poured music into them they may not fully fulfil their mission. So Thyagaraja says boldly that the Vedhas sought the support of music.

"VEDHAPURAANAAGAMA SAAS-  
THRAADHULA KAADHAARAMOU  
NAADHASUDHAARASAM"  
(NAADHASUDHAARASAM ;  
ARABHI)

#### Nectar of Naadha

Again Thyagaraja reiterates the same thing. The nectar of naadha is the vital force in the Vedhas, Puraanas, Agamas and Saasthras. 'Aadhaaramu' is prop or support. But prop or support does not sound well. So, I have chosen vital force, changing the metaphor. "MODHAKARA NIGAMOTHAMA SAMAVEDHA SARAM" ('NAADHATHANUMANISAM' Chittharanjani). Look at the beauty of this language! Music is the essence of the delectable Samavedha which is the noblest of all the Vedhas. "NIGAMASIRORTHAMUGALGINA NIJAVAAKKULATHO SWARASUDHADHAMUTHO" ('SOGASUGA MRUDHANGATHAALAMU, Sriranjani). With the quintessence of the Vedhas, with truthfulness of words, with purity of notes. Music should have all these things, 'Nigamasira' is a fine phrase. Thyagaraja has used nigama quite often in such striking phrases like 'Nigamajna'.

He was a past-master in the art of coining phrases. Most alluring phrases

seemed to be at his beck and call. He had only to beckon them and they would fall in eagerly and line up before him. Coming back to the song, 'nigama' is Vedha and 'sira' is head, not literally, but idiomatically. So the contents should come from the Vedhas. the words should come from the heart and the notes should come from the source of purity.

Finally, Thyagaraja says "PADHAMU THYAGARAJA NUTHUNIPAIGANIDHI PAADIENI PAADAKUNTENEMI" (SAMA-YAMU THELISI : Asaaveri). If the song is not on Rama, who is venerated by Thyagaraja, what does it matter whether it is sung or not sung? Thus, Thyagaraja has employed music purely as a vehicle for Vedhantha. Sangeetha is the body and Vedhaantha is the soul. Thyagaraja has raised many great Vedhaanthic questions in such songs, as 'Evarani Nirnainchirra', 'E Thaavunara Nilukada' and 'Endhundi-vedalithivo'. After Thyagaraja, Vedhaantha has found a 'vaahana' in Sangeetha.

#### Divine End

Music leads to Mukthi. "SAAKSHATHKAARA NEE SADHBAKTHI SANGEE-  
THAJNAANA VIHEENULAKU, MOK-  
SHAMU GALATHA" (Saaramathi). O. Eternal Immanence; Is there any salvation for those who are devoid of love for you and love for Music? This 'jnaana' is impossible to translate. Knowledge is nothing before it. There are many such intriguing words in Sanskrit. Hence, I have translated Sangeethajnaana as love for music. I may not be wholly wrong, because love comes from jnaana only. This is one of the immortal lines in Carnatic Music and Saaramathi is one of the immortal creations of Thyagaraja. "YAAGA YOGA THYAAGA BHOGAP-  
PALA MOSANGE, RAGASUDHARASA  
PAANAMU CHESI RAJILLAVE O MAN-

ASA" (Andholika). O Mind, drink the manna of music and enjoy yourself. This manna of music offers to you all the fruits of Yaaga, Yoga, Thyaaga and Bhoga. Thyaaga means renunciation. Bhoga is misleading—here, it is not enjoyment or revelry. It is naivedyam or oblation. Another immortal line and another immortal creation of Thyagaraja.

### Jnaana Again

"SANGEETHA SAASTHRAJNAAMU SAROPYASOWKHYADHAME MANASA" (Mukhari). An insight into the science of music would fetch you the immense happiness of attaining the form of the Lord himself. Again and again, we have to face this inscrutable word 'jnaana'. This time I have translated it as 'insight' because jnaana penetrates into the heart and then understands. Insight is the same thing, not merely a preception, but an inner vision. When we get jnaana, we become completely illumined. Saalokyam, Saameepyam, Saropyam and Saayujyam are the four stages of Mukthi. This 'sangeethasaasthragnaamu' is wedded to the story of Rama—Ramacharitha, which is an ocean of bliss swelling with the Navarasam. This Anupallavi of two lines with twenty-two syllables is a single samasam "SRUNGAARARASAADHYAKHILA SAARAPOORITHA RAMAKAKATHAANAMDHABDRIYUTHA". It is difficult even to read these lines as prose, unless we split up the samaasam. How could Thyagaraja put music into it? These are musical wonders! Then what more Sangeethasaasthrajnanamu would give us? "PREMA, BHAKTHI, SUJANAVAATHSALYAMU, SRIMADHRAMAVARAKATAKSHAMU, NEMANISHTA AND YASODHANA MOSANOUNE", 'Sujanavathsalyamu' is affection of good people. 'srimadhramavarakatakshmu' is the anugraha of Sriman Narayana, 'yasodhana' is keerthi,

### Svarga to Apavarga

"SWARARAAGA SUDHAARASAYUTHA BHAKTHI SWARGAAPAVARGAMURA" (Sankarabharanam). Devotion blended with the nectar of music will lead you not only to swarga but also to 'apavarga', from where there is no return. Swarga is only a place of sojourn. After you exhaust the fruits of your merits, you have to return to earth and start again. "MOOLADHAARAJANAADHA MERUGUTE MUDHAMAGU MOKSHAMURA, KOLAHALA SAPTHASWARA GRUHAMULA GURUTHE MOKSHAMURA, O, MANASA". To know the naadha that emanates from the Moolaadhaara Chakra is itself the bliss of Moksha. To know the abodes where the splendid saptaswaras dwell is itself moksha.

I consider this as one of the greatest compositions of Thyagaraja. An immortal piece. It touches on Naadhayoga, Bhakthyoga and Jnaanayoga. It has also a touch of mysticism in it. Where can we find the abodes of the Saptaswaras? In which Loka? The saptaswaras are the manifestation of Sound and Sound pervades the entire cosmos. Is this not mysticism? It is.

### Aesthetic Courage

Thyagaraja himself exclaims "SOGASUGA MRIDHANGA THAALAMU JATHA GOORCHI NINU JAKKA JEYU DHEERU DEVVADO" (Sriranjani). Who is the 'dheera' who can entrance you by harmonizing the mridhanga and thala so gracefully. Dheera means a hero, but hero sounds so absurd here. From dheera to hero is like from pathos to bathos. Dheera also means a sage. But that is not relevant here. The courage here is not either physical courage or moral courage. It is aesthetic courage. "YATHI VISRAMA SADHBHA-

KTHI VIRATHI DHRAAKSHAARASA NAVARASAYUTHAKRUTHICHE BHAJINCHE YUKTHI THYAAGARAJUNI THARAMAA SRI RAMA" Has Thyagaraja the genius to compose a lyric in your praise rhymed according to prosody and imbued with navarases? Yathi relates to rhyme. Visrama and Virathi relate to pause in the lines. A pause also is an alankara, like dramatic pause, poetic pause and rhetorical pause. Thyagaraja himself is so diffident about his music.

If we can't produce such music, is it a pleasure to pound and grind a maddhala, oblivious of rhythm and pace? "MADHALA THAALAGATHULU THELIAKANE NARDHINCHUTA SUKHAMA SUDDHAMANASSULEKA BHAJANA CHEYUTA SOOKARAVRUTHIRA O MANASAA" (Swararagasudha). Doing bhajan without purity of heart is but debasing oneself. Thyagaraja has used a very strong word here, (sookaravruthi); sookara means pig. But what 'sookaravruthi' means I am not able to find out. So I have refrained from using the word pig. Thyagaraja is very guarded in his words. It may have some idiomatic meaning, less offensive.

"SAHAJABHAKTHITHO RAAGAJANANASAHITHUDU MUKTHUDURA O: MANASA"

One who has real devotion and real music in him, and joined hands, he is a Muktha indeed O Mind.

This is the music that Thyagaraja cherished.

I conclude this talk with another celebrated song of Thyagaraja which sounds like a verdict on the acquisition of Sangeethagnaana: "SEETHAAVARA SANGEETHA JNAANNMU DHAATHA VRAAYAVALERAA RAMA" (Dhevagaandhaari) Q Rama, Sangeethajnaanamu comes only when Brahma gives it. Not otherwise. Dhaatha is Brahma. Vraayavelera means he should write. This 'write' here is an idiomatic usage. In Telugu it is called thalavraatha. I could not find an equivalent idiom in English. Hence I have used the plain word 'gives'. Why does Brahma bestow Sangeethajnaanam on us? So that, we may imbibe the essence of the Gita and all the Upanishads and thus attain Jeevanmukthi: "GEETHAADHYAKHILOPANISHAD TESARVABHOOTHA JEEVANMUKTHUDAUTAKU". Saarahootha is a fine phrase, meaning 'embodied with the essence'. I will stop here at this fitting end.

"Namaame Me, O Thyagabrahmam, manasa, sirasa, Vaaram, Vaaram, Namaame me" (Paper presented at the conference convened by Kala Sadan in Bombay in September 82).

# Sathguru Sri Tyagaraja Swami

(1767—1847)

**Musician, Composer, Poet, Philosopher & Saint**

By

Dr. R. KRISHNASWAMY

Sri Tyagaraja Swami was born on the 4th of May 1767, as the third son of Sri Rama Brahman and Srimathi Shantha Devi, belonging to the Mulakanadu Trilinga Veidiki sect, in the town of Tiruvarur, Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu. When Swami was about five years old, his parents moved to Tiruvayyaru or Panchanatha Kshetra, on the Northern bank of the Cauvery. Tulajaji, the Mahratta ruler of Tanjore, had made endowments of land to Sri Rama Brahman, to enable him to live in reasonable comfort and function as a "Powranika", doing "Upanyasa" work at Tiruvayyaru. Assisting his daily worship of the family 'Ishta Devata', Sri Rama Swami learnt many things, from methods of worship to a thorough knowledge of the Puranas which he has used in propagating the basic tenets of Hinduism. Swami had the conventional education, which all Brahmin boys were required to undergo in those days. In the 'Patasala' (which still functions in Tiruvayyaru) he learnt Sanskrit and acquired mastery over scriptural interpretations of Puranic lore. Swami's father taught him Telugu.

## Sweet voice

Coming from a musical lineage on both parental sides, he soon acquired proficiency in singing. He had a sweet and very responsive voice, cultivated over long periods of reciting scriptures. To give polish to his musical acumen and to equip him to be a concert artiste, Swami's

father placed him under the tutelage of the great Sonti Venkataramaniah, a court musician of repute. After only a couple of years, Sonti Venkataramaniah was so pleased with his student that he not only allowed him to start singing on his own, but presented him with a bracelet, which only really first class vidwans could sport.

## Austere way of Life

Despite many offers of asthana vidwanship and invitations to sing in courts and various sadas, Swami preferred to eke out his livelihood in the austere way, prescribed for 'Bhagavatas', through accepting alms from householders during a 'Bhajana' tour of the village each day—"Unchavrihi". He refused firmly invitations to sing about kings and zamindars. His devotion, austerity, scholarship, musical genius and his firm adherence to tradition earned him many students and admirers. Soon his fame spread all over the country. Many disciples came to join his 'gurukula'. Swami's compositions were thus spread far and wide and were sung in places as far apart as Benares and Trivandrum. In variety and number, no other composer has left us such a rich heritage.

## Aradhanas Unique

Swami is unique in that no other composer is honoured with 'aradhanas'. Latterly and indeed with every year that passes, the number of 'aradhanas' keeps

increasing, both at home and abroad. Mr. William Johnson from New York, is now gathering material for a thesis on Sri Tyagaraja's contribution to world religion and language. He is the only composer whose life story was written *during his life time*, thereby giving us an authentic account which has not been added to, to pander to the psychological needs of those, who need miracles and superman stories to believe in a great one. Swami is the only composer on whom there are over five hundred musical compositions by great musicians of his own time through to contemporary ones. From Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavathar and Manar-nombuchavadi Venkatasubbier through Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar, Mysore Vasudevachar and Sengalipuram Anantharama Dikshitar, Koteeswara Iyer and some vidwans still happily with us, all have sung his praise. He is the only composer, whose compositions were copied and the spurious compositions given his 'mudra', to ensure popularity. Because of all these divine qualities, thousands worship him, not as a composer but as a Deity or an 'Avtar Purusha'.

## Versatility

Swami has a multi-faceted attractiveness. Just as a great ocean interests the biologist, the chemist, the oceanographer and others, each for a different reason, and yet there are many who are just content to sit and admire its awesome majesty and enjoy its cool breeze, so there are scholars and critics, who have made a detailed study of Swami's poetry, music, philosophy, 'nada yoga' and so forth, while at the same time there are millions who, neither knowing the language nor the message it conveys nor the nuances on which the message is conveyed, enjoy listening to his simple rhyming lilting lyrics, easy to sing even by novices.

## Poetry

Sri Tyagaraja Swami's songs have been described by scholars as poetry set to music. He has attempted almost every kind of verse and has shone brilliantly with success of a high order. His 'Kanda Padyas', 'Seesa Padyas', 'Uthpalamalas', 'Dwipadis' etc., are master-pieces in their own right, as literature of his days. None of his poems need 'anvaya' or prosification to find out the meaning. They are straight sentences with verbs and nouns in the order as in prose. His forte is the 'Dwithiyakshara Prasa' or the prosody of the second letter or syllable. Even the most difficult 'Dwithiyaksharas' like 'HA' or 'KSHA' are handled with ease. A study of any of the Kritis will easily reveal this. Kritis "Graha Balamemi" and "Mahitha Pravrudha" show how the most difficult 'Dwithiyaksharas' have been handled with such ease, in simple rhyme. His 'Vinayamunanu' in Sowrashtram is a masterpiece in 'prasa' and 'parayanama', using synonyms for feet, hands, 'asthra', and eyes etc., narrating 'Sampurna Ramayana'. The sound 'N' which occurs as 'Dwithiyakshara' occurs no less than forty eight times, without sounding unnaturally built in—a feat not easy to achieve.

Swami uses new words of his own coining as in the word 'Bharye' as occurring in the 'Divya Nama kriti' 'Manasa Sancharare' - BHA - 'Nakshatra', Arya 'Sreshta' or head, meaning 'Chandra' or Moon. Similarly, the word 'Vina' is used to describe 'Garuda', as follows: 'Vi' is 'pakshi' (bird) and 'Ina' is 'Surya' (sun). Great among birds is 'Garuda'. He also uses words based on the 'Mantra Sastra'. In one Madhyamavati kriti, he uses the expression, "Yantha, Bhantha, Nisantha" words for which translation had to be obtained from His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Peeta of Kanchi. After

thinking it over for a couple of days, His Holiness gave the solution as follows :- 'Ya Antha' - the letter after 'Ya' i.e. Ra. Bha Antha - the letter after Bha i.e. Ma. 'Nisantha' is the dispeller of darkness of the night and so the whole made "Ra Ma Chandra". He also told us that this was based on the 'Mantra Sastra' tradition of coining words.

### Music

Sathguru has composed in 210 'ragas' covering 42 'melas' and has left a prolific number of songs of considerable musical merit. In volume and variety, his legacy to us is something phenomenal. He has many firsts to his credit. He was the first to define the 'kriti' as we know it today, with 'pallavi', 'anu pallavi' and 'charana' and indeed left us 'kritis' giving the 'lakhsanas' and 'lakshyas' to be followed. From simple 'Divya Namas' for group singing, to the most elaborately architected compositions, each one of his creations is a work of great artistry in verse and music. He was the first to introduce 'sangathis', to bring out the beauty of the raga and, in some cases, the meaning of the word being sung. In 'Todi', 'Kedara Gowla', 'Harikhambhoji', to mention only a few of the ragas most popular in his days, Swami has composed 'kirtanas' starting from practically every note in the octave. He has composed five 'kirtanas' each on the Deities of the places he visited, in pilgrimage. These are known as the 'Pancha Ratnas' of the 'kshetras' e.g. 'Srirangam Pancha Ratna', 'Lalgudi Pancha Ratna' and so on. Many of his compositions, apparently composed leisurely and deliberately ornamented, are musical gems of inestimable value. Swami has shown a genius for handling 'Vivadi melas'. In ragas such as Gangeya Bhushani, Nagandini etc., the 'vivadi' note

has been introduced in the opening phrase of the kriti, so that no mistake can be made of the raga. Similarly, when handling uncommon ragas like Bhinna Shadjam or Bindumalini or Sidha Sena, the 'arohana' is built into the opening phrase of the 'pallavi' itself, making it easy for the student to grasp the 'swarupa'. Swami is the only composer, whose musical compositions have 'sahitya' value.

### Nadopasana

The worship of pure sound as a means to the realisation of the 'Brahman' has been advocated. He is the only composer who has left a number of songs on 'Sangita', 'Nada Vidya' and 'Nadopasana'. Arranged in a sequential order, these kritis explain step by step, how 'Nadopasana' has the merit of making the devotee realise all the glories of this earth and the worlds beyond. Also he has taken straight out of 'Sangita Ratnakara' and 'Naradeeyam' the text of the slokas and made songs of them. 'Nada Thanum Anisam', 'Sobhillu Saptha Swara' 'Nadopasana', are some examples of the 'Saranga Deva slokas' being adapted for the creation of these songs. In one kriti Swami has outlined the various material and spiritual benefits the student of 'Nadopasana' can enjoy. He describes his 'Ishta Devata' as the human manifestation of the music which leads to salvation, a method which he describes in the 'kriti'—'Manasa Etulorthune' as "Sulabhamuga Kada theranu soochana" or the easy method to liberation from bondage. He insists that one must be a 'jeevan muktha' in this world to attain 'moksha' and to be a 'jeevan muktha' one must possess 'sangita jnana' and 'Bhakti' or devotion. Music without devotion is like

lifeless art objects. He mentions the practice in some communities of decorating the dead and compares music without devotion to such decorated corpses. Students of Bhaskara Raya Makhin's commentary on Lalitha Sahasra Nama will find that the commentaries on the namas 'Para' and 'Nada Rupa' closely resemble the explanation Swami has given of the 'Mooladharaja Nada' and liberation through the identification of the 'saptha swaras'. In a short note of this nature, it is impossible to cover this vast subject.

### Philosophy

It is on this aspect of the Swami's works that most has been written and spoken. The 'Advaitis', the 'Visishtadvaitis' and the 'Dwaithis' have all claimed that Swami has propagated their brand of philosophy. However, a dispassionate study will show that Swami has advocated all the 'margas', so that one may choose that which suits his own emotional needs most. In the kriti 'Anuragamu leni' in Saraswathi, he says that spiritual satisfaction is one of absolute value and relative. No one can say that the satisfaction one derives from following one school of thought better or worse than the satisfaction another person gets from following another school of thought. 'Dwaithamu Sukhama', 'E Dari Sancharithura' and numerous other kritis show us clearly that Swami did not dogmatically advocate one or other 'margas'. Indeed the 'Tennacharya Vaishnavaites' claim he advocated 'Marjara Nyaya' as in the Bhairavi kriti—'Thanayuni Brova'; and the other 'Vaishnavite' school claims that Swami just repeated Vedanta Desika and they point out the Sri Ranjani kriti—'Bhuvini Dasudane' which, they say is an exact reproduction of Desika's 'Panchanga Prapatti'. His 'Ishta Devata' was Sri

Rama. He explains how he arrives at this by explaining that Rama is an ideal man and possesses none of the weaknesses of the Hindu Trinity—'Brahma, Vishnu, Siva,' each of whom has been mentioned in the puranas to have done something wrong at one time or the other. He also says that the name 'Rama' combines the 'jeevaksharas' of 'Narayana' and 'Namassivaya'—'Ra and Ma' and finally citing Purana, again he says that it is the same 'marga' Narada showed Valmiki, Sukha Brahmam showed Parikshit and Parama Siva revealed to Parvati '(Saramegani)—Pantuvrali). He emphasizes that it is not enough if one repeats the nama, but one's mind should be dwelling on the form of 'Sri Rama', with love. In the kriti 'Telisi Rama', Swami points out that Rama could mean the 'Brahman' or a woman, 'Arka' is synonym for a poisonous weed and 'Suriya', and 'Aja' is the term used to refer to both Brahma and a goat.

Even though his 'Ishta Devata' was Rama, he sang on all the deities of the Hindu Pantheon and indeed even on Nature. His kriti—'Sari Vedalina Kaverini Ganare' and his description of Tiruvayyaru as in the kriti 'Muripemo' in Mukhari, are examples.

### Utsava Sampradaya Kritis

To enable 'Sagunopasakas' to move from 'Salokya' to 'Saujya', i.e. from proximity to the Lord to merging with him, Swami composed 'Uthsava Sampradaya' and 'Divya Nama' kirtanas. He described them as songs for group singing and invited all to join him in singing these and obtaining thereby, all the 'sowbhagyas'. He, however, repeatedly emphasized that rituals are but a means to an end and one should not get bogged down

in ritual, as ritual by itself led nowhere. He asks with humour and poignancy whether the monkeys who live in forests are practising 'vana vasa' or whether the highway robbers who live in caves are practising 'ekanta'. "Do not ask God for boons. No one who asked for it remained happy". "If pain occurs, bear it". "All you can ask is the strength to bear whatever God sends you." He keeps repeating (Adigi sukhamu'-Madhyamavathi and 'Sadinchene' - Arabhi etc). Only renunciation will bring immortality. Unselfishness, charity, piety, forgiveness, compassion, universal love and truthfulness are far more important than knowledge of rituals. A person who has enormous knowledge but does not know love is an ass that carries a load of books. 'Veda' could lead to 'Vada' (intellectual knowledge could merely lead to a 'tharka' or debate to promote one's image and deprive one of humility. Hence, beware of all things which could lead you to forget to love. His final message to us is to do 'nama parayana' with music and in a congregation "Tyagaraju telisikonna taraka miha parasadhanamu, - Rama Rama Krishna-Gowlipanthu).

### The Eternal Flame

Swami's greatness was such that he predicted precisely when his life would end on this planet. On the day of his 'deha vimukthi' he had his students with him singing 'Bhaja Govindam'. Exactly at the time he had predicted, while the tempo of the bhajan was at its height, all those who had assembled saw a 'jothi' rise from Swami's head and travel skyward. Mr. Shama Rao, the then Tahsildar of

Tiruvayyaru, who was an eye witness to this miracle, has recorded it for posterity.

### Nagarathnammal's Devotion

Tyagaraja Swami's only child was a daughter, who bore no children. Hence there are no direct descendants of the Swami today. Srimathi Vidya Sundari Bangalore Nagarathnammal of hallowed memory built a temple for him, left an estate for meeting day-to-day puja expenses and composed an 'ashtothra satha namavali' for daily puja. Many devotees have added to the size of the temple and one has even gifted a house, the rent from which is to meet the daily expenditure needs. The annual music festival, with which all are familiar, is conducted by a 'Sabha', which has no responsibility for the upkeep of the premises of the 'samaadhi' or the daily conduct of worship. This is sad because thousands of rupees are spent each year on the festivities, while the 'samaadhi' itself languishes without the funds which are badly needed for the smooth running of the daily routine. We pray and hope that it will not be long before all these concerned come together for the good of all concerned.

It is so gratifying to be able to participate in the numerous 'aradhanas' being conducted in this country. I am in particular indebted to the Bharathi Society of America, Telugu Literary and Cultural Association and Carnatic Music Association who are jointly celebrating the Aradhana and have permitted me to associate myself with their celebration—(With acknowledgments to the above bodies doing wonderful work in U.S.A. and by gracious permission of the author)

## Saint Thyagaraja

By

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"Where can I search for you ? O Hari I

You did not come

even after hearing Brahma's prayers.

With my mind full of sins,

doing evil deeds,

often speaking foul words.

Going about this world posing as a devotee

O the one who is worshipped by Thyagaraja !

Where can I search for you ' ' ?

(*Nenendu Vethukudhura*)

It is at such moments, when the mind is filled with despair in the desperate search for the meaning of life and is paralyzed by the fear of very existence, that hope starts to shine with ever increasing brilliance by the recounting of the stories of the Ithihasas and Puranas.

"Take note of the third and sixth chapters (of the work Ramayana) the sage (Valmiki) who emerged of out of the ant hill (and so) O mind ! Never forget Sri Ramachandra "

(*Manasa ! Sri Ramachandruni maravake.*)

"He is the one who accepted the crown only to save the fallen people "

(*"Pathithula broche pattadhikarini "* in the song *Chanithodi theve.*)

We are never tired of reading and rereading the puranas assuring ourselves about His Grace to His devotees. Did He not save the elephant Gajendra from the deadly grip of the crocodile, did He not protect the modesty of Drowpadhi ("Varanarajunu brovanu Vegame Vachchinadhi Narimaniki jiralichinadhi, . . ." in the song "Kshira sagara sayana") Did He not, moved by the sufferings of Ahalya, bless her by the grace of His eyes ("Dharini Chilayaj thapamu talaka. . . Ahalyanu juchi brochitha" in the song "Sri Rama padama"), did He not take care of Prahladha who surrendered to Him (unable to bear the cruelties of Hiranya) ("Prahladu jaliche charanana-ga hithakarundai brochithi" in the song "Parihasakama") . . . ?

### Oneness of Souls

These are the contents of the songs and bhajans, we sing constantly—compositions which form the backbone of our classical music given to us by devotees like Thyagaraja, Surdas, Mira Bhai, Kabirdas, Purandara Dasa and a host of others. These great people lived in different times, different places, had different backgrounds. Yet their melodious outpourings reveal oneness of their souls, namely, the soul of the Bhakthi (the path of devotion) movement in Hinduism.

Saint Thyagaraja was born in Tiruvayur in South India in 1767. His father's name was Sri Ramabrahmam. His



mother's name was Sithamma. In one of his songs ("Sithamma mayamma"), Thyagaraja aptly claims :

"Sithamma is my mother

Sri Rama is my father."

He was born to a divine heritage. So he continues :

"Anchaneya, Lakshmana, Garuda, Chatrugna, Jatayu, Bharatha are brothers to me. Shiva, Vasishtha, Parasara, Naradha, Sownaka, Sukha, Indra, Goudhama, Ganesa, Guha, Sanaka-such sincere devotees whosoever they are, they are my very close relatives."

Thyagaraja's family moved to a smaller city Thiruvaiyaru in the same district. (Thiruvaiyaru has the same meaning as Punjab-namely, the place where five rivers flow. The holy river Kaveri splits into five branches and flows in that area.) There Thyagaraja attended a Sanskrit school. When he was eight years old, he was formally initiated and his father taught him the Rama (Taraka) Manthra. Even while sporting with other children, the contemplation of the Taraka Manthra filled Thyagaraja's mind with divine ecstasy.

### Flowering

His talents as a musician and composer showed up early. He learnt music from his guru Venkataramaniah. He also mastered texts of Indian music such as Naradiyam, Sangitha Rathnagaram, Svaranavam. Like the great musicians of his time, he knew the grammar. He knew how to make magic with words and music. But the real substance of this sadana eluded him ("Kavijala Varen-yulu bhavamerugaleru" in the song "Dhasarathi

Nirunamu tirpa"). Thyagaraja became very despondent.

To overcome it, he resolved to perform Rama Nama Japa one crore (ten million) times. When he completed the japa, a very vivid vision of Rama flashed before him. Thyagaraja broke into inspired music with the song "Balakanakamayachela" where the indescribable grandeur of the samasa (combination words) epithets he uses to address Sri Rama combined with the melody of the Raga Atana to give an idea of the magnificence and veracity of his ecstatic vision.

### The Southern Ayodhya

From that moment Thyagaraja looked upon Thiruvaiyaru as Ayodhya, his home as the eternal abode of Sita Lakshmana Bharatha Chatrugna Hanumath samedha Sri Ramachandra Para Brahman and his life's purpose as service to Him. This he described in countless number of his compositions which are the embodiment of music, poetry and pure devotion.

Thyagaraja's compositions enraptured everybody. Musicians, poets and philosophers flocked to meet him. The constant company of such savants created in Thyagaraja's mind an ever increasing realisation of the greatness of the culture around him. One night he listened to a brilliant vocalist known as Shatkala Govinda Marar. The music thrilled him so much that he experienced in it the immense glory that pervades everywhere. He felt truly humbled and in a mood of reverence sang spontaneously a composition—one of his very best—wherein he offered his respects to all those who are the vehicles of this glory ("Endaro mahabhavulu anthiriki vandhanamu").

### Spurning wealth

People with enormous wealth went to surrender it all at his feet. He fraternised with one and all, but he shunned their material wealth. His relatives and friends wanted him to accept what was offered as richly deserved tribute to his devotion. But to him the true and only reward is the transformation of oneself into a devotee. That was all that he wanted to be worthy of. When he was unable to bear the pressures of his relatives and friends, Thyagaraja would tearfully appeal to Rama for help ;

"When my mind desires  
only true devotion to you,  
is it fair to tempt me  
with other boons?"

("Namana subhakthi ne koriyundaga  
Nanu varalendhu Kommani nayan-  
dhu vanchana seyuda nyayama?" in  
the song "Varalendhu").

Even the words in the song move us. To sing it or listen to it sung will give us an idea of the pathos of the situation which Thyagaraja experienced when his devotion was so cheapened.

Thyagaraja reinforced the Bhakthi movement in South India by his life, travels and musical compositions which included two operas "Prahladha Bhakthi Vijayam" and "Nowka Charithram".

He transformed music from the mundane and pure art level to the status of a yoga—Nadha Yoga. He asserted and showed through his life that the integration of music and devotion leads one to liberation in one's lifetime (with acknowledgements to the Bharathi Society of America).

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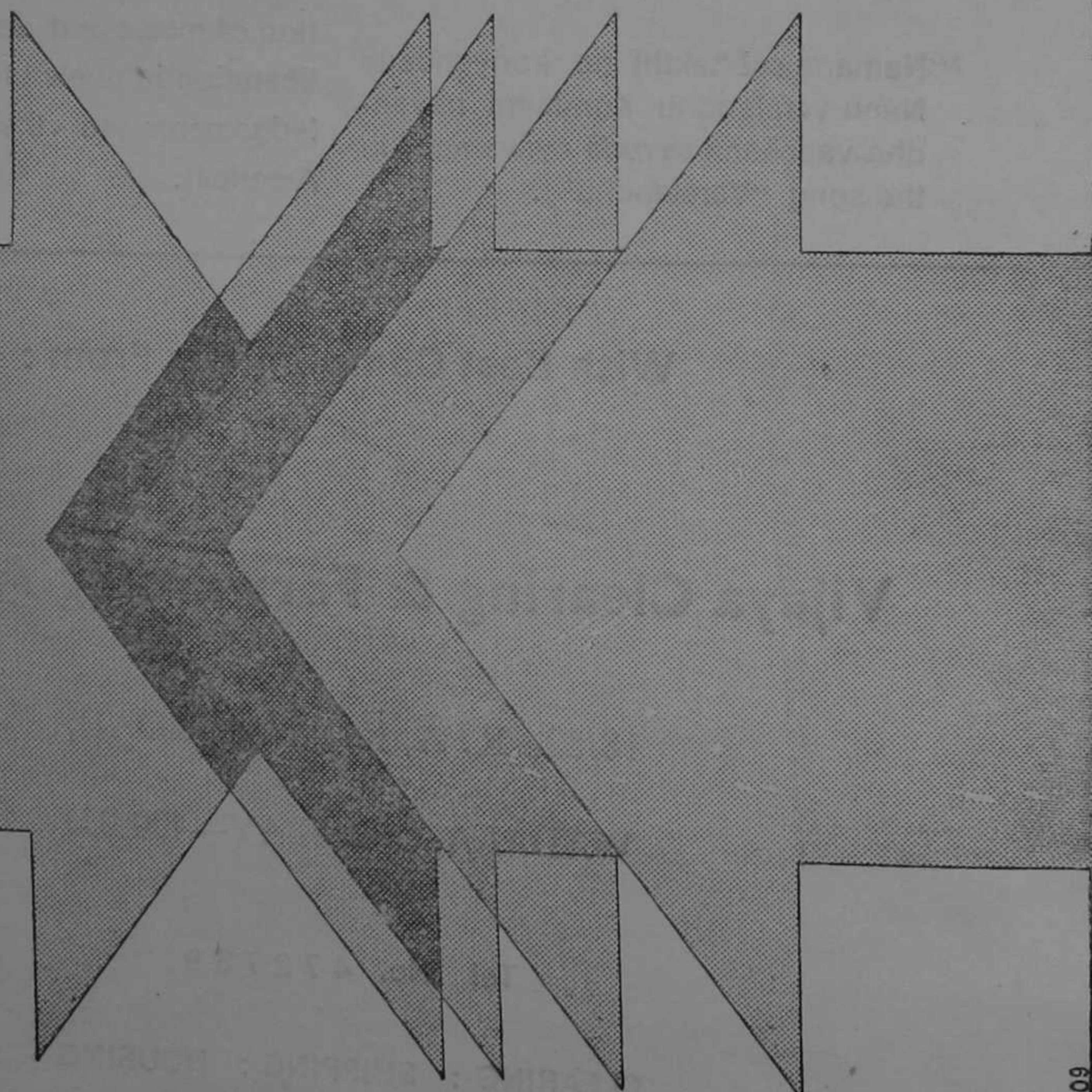
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—Samuel Taylor Coleridge



INS009

## Ode to Thyagaraja

*Thyagaraja mahithatmuni golicheda*  
*Raga taia niramjanamulatho*      *|| Th ||*

*Naradadi sura nadavidhatala*  
*Cheruvandu Harisevakudagu Sri*      *|| Th ||*

*Bhagavathoththama bhavaveechikala*  
*Ragasudharasa ramyageethikala*  
*Nagasayanun anandadolikala*  
*Nuginche ganodarudu Sri*      *|| Th ||*

*Paramathmuni madi paravasyamuna*  
*Parikinche Haribhakhudu thani*  
*Thirumalavasuni thera theeyamani*  
*Kori tharimchina kovidudagu Sri*      *|| Th ||*

*Pallavi* : With ragam, talam and neeranjanam, I shall worship Saint Thyagaraja, who

*Anupallavi* : serves Lord Hari in the company of sage Narada and other divine music makers,

*Charanam One* : as the greatest of singers, swings Nagasayana (Vishnu) in the cradle of unbounded joy with thoughts of the holiest nature and songs that generate the heavenly raga-nectar,

*Charanam Two* : as one who perceives the Almighty in his soul, reached him by asking and receiving from Lord Tirumalesa the boon of having the screen of malice removed from his soul.

I FEEL PROUD TO HAVE BEEN BORN IN THE LAND OF THYAGARAJA. I FEEL BLESSED TO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF THYAGARAJA.

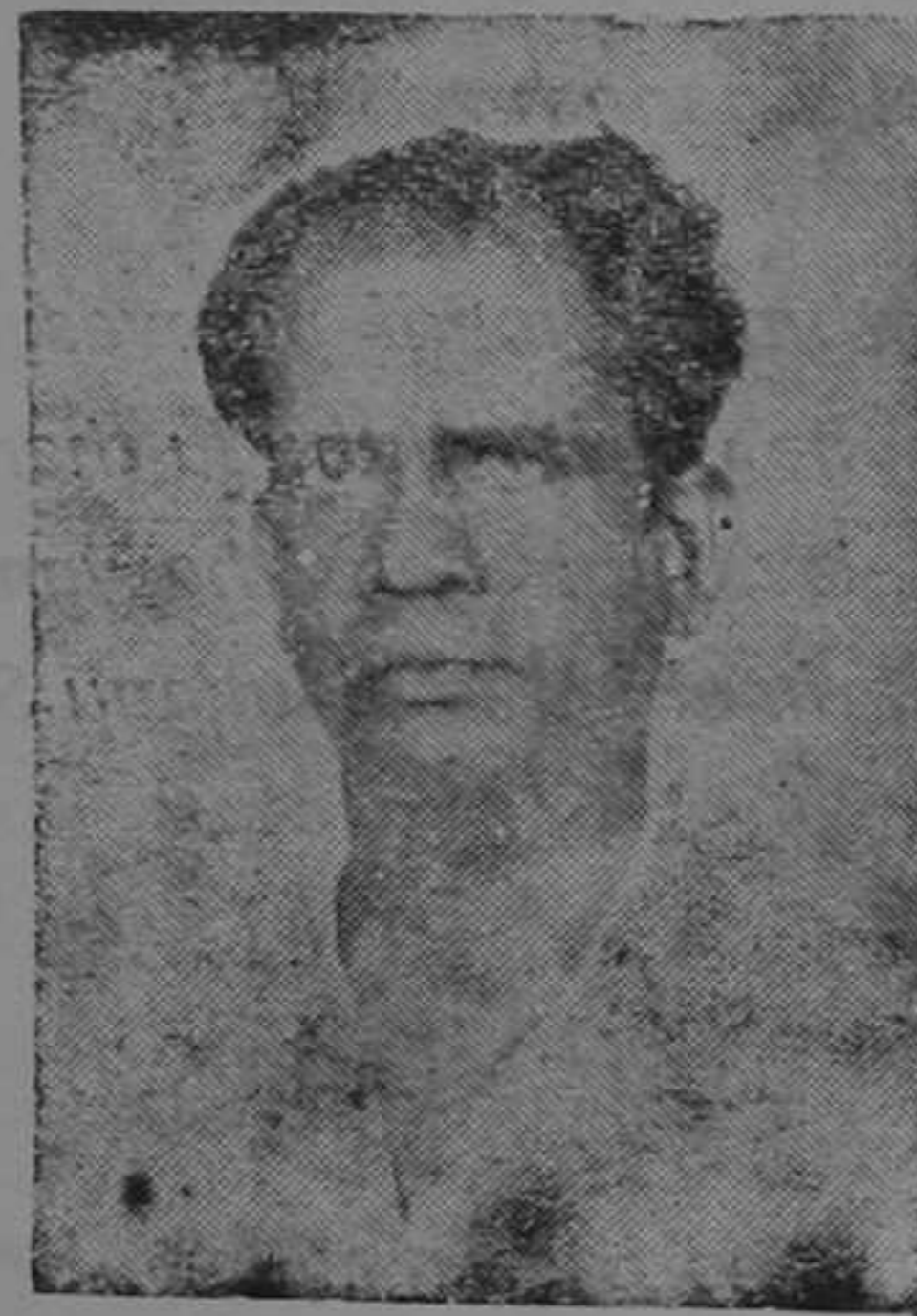
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## The Great Violins

By

T. C. SATHYANATH

Stewart Granger, the matinee idol of the cinema immediately after World War II, once appeared in the role of the famous violin virtuoso Nicolo Paganini (1782-1840) in a movie called "The Magic Bow". There was considerable interest in the film not only from Granger's fans but also from the music lovers because the playback for him was provided by none other than Yehudi Menuhin. And I vividly remember this particular scene in which Granger, wearing a wig and an appropriate expression which all geniuses are supposed to have, his chest heaving with the excitement welling up inside him, gazes intensely for a few moments at a precious violin. He then takes it out reverently and hesitantly, rests it on his chin, plays a few tentative notes and plunges vigorously and furiously into one of Paganini's almost unplayably difficult Caprices.

Forgetting that it was actually Menuhin playing, I developed a momentary admiration for Stewart Granger. A few days afterwards, I read a review of the movie in one of the intellectual weeklies published in England, which concluded with a withering remark which read roughly, as follows: "As for Stewart Granger, his performance was more agricultural than realistic. One got the impression that he was trying to saw wood with the right hand while milking cow with the other".

\* This violin was recently taken out by Salvatore Accordo to be played in Carnegie Hall, New York, under insurance (\$ 800,000).

### A Guarneri for Paganini

The scene actually was an attempt at depicting a notable incident in the life of Paganini pertaining to a violin made by that great Italian violin maker Giuseppe Guarneri. A wealthy French music lover who owned it had very kindly lent it to Paganini. After hearing Paganini's performance, this owner not only decided that it should never be played by any other violinist but also gifted it to him. In fact, after Paganini's death, it was placed in a glass case in Genoa and has since come to be known as "Paganini's widow", "perpetually conserved" according to Paganini's will.

This Guarnerius crafted in 1742 is one of the fifty which are still extant out of the 550 odd violins he crafted. \* His violins have a rare and distinct, characteristic quality of tone which many can recognise instantly.

### The Great Violin Makers

The earliest of the violin makers were Gasparo da Salo, Giovanni Maggini and Andrea Amati. It was under Andrea Amati's grandson Nicolo, that the greatest of the violin makers of all, Antonius Stradivarius (1644-1737) did an apprenticeship for about seven years in the little town of Cremona in Italy which he and other violin makers made famous, just as Miraj is for sitars and tamburas in India.

Here in Cremona was, first, this confluence of the three greatest families in the history of violin making and then, the three parallel streams, each one striving to modify, refine and improve the same musical instrument, the violin, generation after generation with an almost obsessive dedication.

### Stradivarius

While Giuseppe Guarneri (1626-1698) also known as 'Giuseppe del Gesu', was influenced by Maggini and laid more emphasis on a robust tone (rather than visual perfection) which was what attracted Paganini, Antonius Stradivarius started his own label in 1666. He was a prodigious worker, who continuously experimented in his quest for perfection and turned out some 1100 violins, violas, cellos and guitars out of which about 550 are known to exist and still in excellent condition. Like the Guarneri, Stradivarius married twice and all his eleven children became violin makers. There was such a surge of demand for his violins that he became affluent enough to create a common expression in Cremona, "rich as Stradivarius".

### Fakes

Not unnaturally, there has been a proliferation of "Strads" and even today, some 'proud owner' turns up with what turns out to be a fake. And occasionally one hears about an old violin which has been lying in some one's attic which is discovered to be a priceless Guarneri, Amati or a Strad. Because the actual number of genuine ones is small and limited, their prices have been skyrocketing, not just because they are coveted by the leading violinists and collectors but also because of the activities of predatory dealers who pick them up in the sure knowledge that

resale can only mean a premium—like the old masters. In 1979, a Stradivarius auctioned by Sotheby's in London fetched no less than one million sterling.

### A Great Trier

Stradivarius did not just 'churn out' violins of the type he had learned to make from Nicolo Amati. He experimented indefatigably and in 1690 produced what is referred to as the 'long strad' which was 14.3/16 inches long and 8 inches wide. He persisted, shortening the body, varying the size and design of the pegs and the fingerboards. The earlier violins had an arched and deep belly and back. Stradivarius realised that by making the body shallower he could achieve a more vibrant tone. He even tried different types of wood and varied its thickness, applied different varnishes with his own secret formula, varying in colour from bright orange to dark red and deep red. Many Strads earned individual names like "Viotti" and "Dolphin", just as some Guarneris acquired names such as "Sale" and "Count dequille".

### A New Design

The last of the modifications in the design of the violin took place in the 19th century, with the advent of the large auditoriums which demanded a greater volume of sound from the violin. (The happy fact that electronic amplification has not been successful on the violin speaks for its individuality). To attain this, the bridge was heightened, and the bass bar as well as the sound post thickened. The neck was angled back more steeply to enable the player to apply more pressure on the bridge. The soft intimate tone of the violin became more brilliant.

The violin is categorised as a bowed stringed instrument, and in a stringed

instrument, the tones are produced by vibrations of a taut string. The most primitive string instrument is supposed to have originated from the twang of an arrow released from a hunter's bow. Man then discovered that when the bow was placed on a hollow object, like a pot or a gourd, there was an increase in the volume of the sound produced.

### Raw Material

A violin is not easy to make. Various types of wood like sycamore, pine, ebony, peakwood, maple, etc., go into the making of one. The air enclosure of the body determines the tonal quality and therefore, its exact proportions are important, as are the places and size of the 'f' holes, the curvature and even the quality of wood used for the *sound posts*.

### The Parts

The strings used on a violin are made of pig gut or sheep gut or gut wound round an aluminium wire, or of steel or nylon. The thin wooden bridge is held in place, midway to the 'f' hole by the pressure of the strings on the belly. The finger board is of ebony and has no frets (unlike its predecessor, the viol). The sound post is positioned directly under the treble 'foot' of the bridge end inside the belly (under the fourth string). This little stick of pine, wedged between the top and bottom boards, transmits the vibrations to the back of the instrument. Then, fixed under the belly and running lengthwise is a narrow wood bar, the bass bar, which is what gives the violin its resonance.

### The Bow

The bow is made of a wooden stick strung from one end to the other with horse hair. Originally, the bow curved outwards and it was the greatest bow-maker of them all, Francois Tourte, who

died in 1835 at the age of 88, who devised the modern bow with the inward curve which gave the player greater control. On the cheaper bows available today, the horse hair has been substituted by artificial fibre.

### Bowing Technique

An important rule of bowing which is not always observed by our violinists is that the bow should be held at an angle with the wooden stick facing away from the player and the hair facing him. And not all hair should touch the strings; only thus can he get the maximum modulation of tones from the violin. Bowing plays a very vital role in determining what texture and quality of sound a player can extract out of it. For instance, he can just caress it. By drawing the bow smoothly and slowly, and if he so requires, increasing the pressure or decreasing it as the hand moves, he can produce several connected (legato) notes with his left hand in one single continuous movement of his right-hand. He can strike on the strings and produce staccato notes. By a vigorous and determined lateral movement, he can produce a powerful single note either on the downstroke or the up stroke. The possibilities for variations are infinite and the bowing technique alone assumes considerable importance in the individual style of a violinist. In Western music an experienced ear can unmistakably recognise a Heifetz or an Oistrakh from the bowing, just as in Indian music one can pick up a T. N. Krishnan, a Lalgudi, a M. S. Gopalakrishnan, a Rajam or M. Chandrasekharan on the one hand or a Jog on the other. It is astonishing, however, to see some of our prominent violinists allowing the bow to stray away from the position it should always move on viz., between the bridge and the finger-board.

### Tuning, Fingering Etc.

In western music, the violin is tuned to G-D-A-E (Sa-Pa-Ri-Dha) while, in Indian music the four strings are tuned to Sa-Pa-Sa-Pa (G-D-G-D), the third and fourth strings being exactly an octave higher than the first two respectively.

The various notes are produced on the violin by pressing the fingers of the left hand against the fingerboard starting with the index finger. (The thumb is not used, although it is, in the case of the cello). In Western music, this operation is called stopping. The pitch of the note is determined by the length of the string which is allowed to vibrate between the finger and the string. The violinists in India have so well mastered this western musical instrument that, with a single finger moving up and down the fingerboard, all the required notes are produced without a break. M. S. Gopalakrishnan, for instance, is sometimes using a single finger to cover a whole gamut of gamaka notes. Such glissandos are not much in evidence in Western music.

### Note Production

The most difficult feature of the violin which makes it at once a unique and challenging instrument even to the experienced violinists (and exasperating to the beginners and to those out of practice) is that as mentioned earlier, it has no frets, and therefore, one has to know the placing of the fingers from memory, or almost by instinct, to get the correct pitch. And the distances between notes contract progressively as the fingers move higher and higher up the fingerboard! A millimetric deviation is enough to produce the wrong note and ruin a whole sequence.

### Tones

Several techniques are required to be employed in Western music. There is

the double stopping (seldom used or needed in Indian music) and even triple and quadruple stopping playing two, three or even four melodies at the same time. A Flagelette-tone (in German) or the Flautando (Italian) which means the sound of a flute can be produced by *barely* touching the open string precisely at its middle resulting in a tone exactly one octave higher. These are the natural harmonics. By pressing the finger for a particular note, at the same time ever so gently touching the string with the little finger gives a note which is *two* octaves higher—the artificial harmonics. There is the pizzicato, which involves the plucking of the strings, instead of bowing. The formidable Paganini even had a pizzicato playing for the *left* hand—bowing on one string and playing notes while plucking another string with the left hand to give the impression of two instruments playing at the same time. Again, there is the trill and the vibrato, the quick or the slow rocking movement of the finger.

### Enesco

Here is Menuhin on how Georges Enesco played:

"He had the most exquisitely varied vibrato and the most wonderful trills of any violinist I have ever known. Depending on the speed and lightness of a trill, his trilling finger struck the string higher than the actual note, thus keeping in tune although the light, fast motion of the finger did not push the string to its full depth on the fingerboard."

An attachment sometimes used to dampen the tone, and often during practice, is the mute (*sordino*). a small metal prong which is slipped on to the bridge to reduce some of the vibrations the bridge carries from the strings to the body of the violin.

While in Western music, the violin is held up with the aid of a chin rest attached to the body of the instrument, in Indian music, the player sits cross-legged and rests the scroll-end on his inside ankle thereby enabling the free movement of his left hand so necessary for producing gamakas.

### Perfect Adaptation

This Western instrument has been adopted by the Carnatic musicians so totally that it is doubtful whether there is even a vernacular word for it yet, but is nevertheless an indispensable and integral part of that music today. Except for the late Mysore T. Chowdiah, who improvised a seven-stringed version of it which did not catch on despite the novelty of its double-reed tone, the violins in use in this country still remain the exact equivalent of the ones used in the West. Some enterprising Indian musicologists with an inquiring mind are reportedly carrying out experiments to produce a violin with sympathetic strings, for instance.

The violin of the present day came to India some two hundred years ago with

the British. I have heard the story, not quite authenticated, that Baluswami Dikshitar, the brother of the great Muthuswamy Dikshitar, saw this instrument being played in the East India Company's Band at Madras, became fascinated by its tone and its capacity to simulate the human voice and realised its immense potential in the context of Carnatic music.

### Unique

One does wonder, however, what bowed instrument would have supplanted the violin in Carnatic music but for Dikshitar's brother's discovery (sic). While Hindustani music has had the Sarangi, an indigenous instrument for *obbligato*, apart from other bowed instruments, it is intriguing that Carnatic music decided to graft a Western instrument for it. The violin is also supposed to have had Eastern origins. The violin bow "is claimed by the Hindus to have been invented by Rabana, King of Ceylon, who, according to tradition, lived five thousand years ago". said the admirable Captain C. R. Day of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry in his highly enterprising book published in 1891. It is arguable.

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## Dr. Muthiah Bhagavathar's Ashtothra Satanama Kritis

By

*Sangita Sastra Ratna, Sangita Sastra Visharada*

M. CHELUVARAYSWAMY, MYSORE

The princely state of erstwhile Mysore was an important centre of fine arts. Music and dance received liberal patronage at the hands of the rulers of the Wodeyar dynasty. The period of Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV (1895-1940) and his successor Jayachamaraja Wodeyar may be regarded as the golden age of music. The musical versatility of the former in range and depth was only just short of the incredible. He had gathered his practice and insight into Carnatic music under Veena Shamma and Veena Seshanna. His court was adorned by eminent musicians of the two systems, or rather three systems including western music, and naturally echoed the best Indian musical confluence from every corner of the country. Jayachamaraja Wodeyar was not only a lover of music but also a musician, musicologist and composer like Swathi Thirunal Maharaja. He was very much influenced by the compositions of the musical Trinity of Mysore: Veena Seshanna, Bidaram Krishnappa and K. Vasudevacharya.

### Court of the Music King

Amongst the galaxy of musicians who adorned the court of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar (1877-1945) rendered yeoman service to Carnatic music as a composer. He has

composed Varnams, krithis, Darus, Javalis and ragamalikas. One who composes his own music and sahitya or mathu is called a Vaggeyakara and one who harmonises the mathu composed by another with his own music or dhathu is called a Keerthanakara. The Chamundamba Ashtotrara Sata Nama krithis of Dr. Muthiah Bhagavathar have to be viewed keeping in mind the above definitions. The Bhagavathar was a brilliant composer in his own right and has composed more than 400 songs in Hindusthani, Tamil, Telugu, Samskrit and Kannada. He has also composed a poetical work in Samskrit on the life of Sri Tyagarajaswami called Sri-mat Thyagaraja Vijaya Kavya, running into seven cantos and is very useful to those who perform Kathakalakshepam on Sri Thyagarajaswami.

Apart from the compositions of Haridasas and Sivasaranas there were few musical compositions worthy of mention in the Kannada language. Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar was very much concerned with this paucity. So he summoned all his court musicians and set before them the task of composing krithis in Kannada in all the 72 mela ragas. The vidwans set about this task. After some initial success they found that the task

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was more readily undertaken than accomplished.

### A Timely Visit

During this period it was that, Muthiah Bhagavathar, who was then a court musician of Travancore state, came to Mysore during the Dasara celebrations of 1927 and gave captivating concerts before the Maharaja and was appointed Asthana vidwan. The title of Gayaka Sikhamani was conferred on him during the succeeding year's Dasara festival. The Bhagavathar, during his stay in Mysore used to go to the Chamundi hills on every Friday morning and sing his compositions on Devi before the patron deity of the Mysore Rulers, Sri Chamundeswari. The Ruler came to know of this and sent for the Bhagavathar and expressed his desire that krithis in Kannada on Chamundeswari may be composed by the Bhagavathar. He also knew that the Bhagavathar's knowledge of Kannada language was not adequate. So he sent for Asthana vidwan Devottama Jois and requested him to cooperate with the Bhagavathar in the task by providing the Sahitya or Mathu for the krithis. Thus the Chamundeswari Ashtottara Sata Namavali krithis are the outcome of the co-operative efforts of these two scholars.

### The Kirtanavali

The Kirtanavali consists of 115 compositions. The first six krithis in sequence are in praise of Ganapathi (Malahari), Saraswathi (Asaveri), Guru (Pushpalatha), Iswara (Saranga), Vishnu (Keeravani) and Anjaneya (Jhunjooti). As the first name in the Ashtottara is 'Sampath pradayai Namaha' the first krithi is 'Sampathprade Sri Chamundeswari' in the rakti raga Kalyani. The last Ashtottara krithi 'Srimat Tripura Sundari' is appropriately in the

auspicious raga 'Madhyamavathi'. The 115th composition 'Jaya Mangalam' is in Vasantha raga.

### Many rare ragas

These krithis are set not only in the Prasiddha ragas but also in rare ragas like 'Oormika', 'Valaji', 'Guharanjani', 'Navaratna vilasa', 'Budhamanohari', 'Pasupathi-priya', 'Bhooshavalir' and 'Simhavahini'. This is a very praiseworthy feature. Scholars are of the opinion that the Sahitya of these compositions is of secondary importance as it contains only the Namavali. To a certain extent this is true. A word here, a verb there, a turn of the phrases, the rounding of the names in the Kannada form are the only indications that they have been composed in the Kannada language.

### Mohana Kalyani

Take the Mohana Kalyani composition which is perhaps the most popular one—'Bhuvaneshwariya-Nene Manasave'. The first and third words are nouns given a Kannada twist. The middle word is a verb in Kannada. This is perhaps one song in which there are more Kannada words than in others. But the beauty of the Dhatu (music) (tune) is of greater importance as it is dipped in the aroma of the ragabhava pure and chaste.

It is also to be noted that these compositions contain the Ankita (Harikesa) of the Bhagavathar and also the several epithets to refer to Devottama Jois—like Mahendra, Suravara, Nirjarendra, Suresha, Devendra, Lachindra, Sakra, Naagaripu, and Amarendra—all indicative of Devendra—the Devottama (supreme lord of the Devas). In providing the text for the songs Sri Devottama Jois ensured this reference to the part played by him very cleverly. These 115 krithis were got printed and

published in Kannada language in 1933. The Bhagavathar sang all the krithis before the Maharaja who was very much pleased with the work and presented him with a very costly, beautiful and large pendant set with precious stones and containing the image of Sri Chamundeswari.

#### An Yugapurusha

Bhagavathar spent his last days in Mysore and passed away on 30-6-1945 at

the age of 69. His contribution to the world of Carnatic music is immense and invaluable. He has enriched the storehouse of Carnatic music in various ways. He has left behind a host of disciples to carry on our rich musical tradition. In fact he may be considered as one of the 'Yuga purushas' in the field of Carnatic music. He was a prince among musicians.

#### FORM IV

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1. Place of its Publication ... 292, Jayshankar Yagnik Marg, Bombay - 400 022.
2. Periodicity of its Publication ... Quarterly.
3. Printer's Name ... Rajan & Co. (Printers) No. 1, Goomes, Street, Madras-1.
4. Publisher's Name ... R. V. Murthy.  
Nationality ... Indian.
5. Address ... Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, Bombay-400022
5. Editor's Name ... K. S. Mahadevan.  
Nationality ... Indian.  
Address ... Plot 30, Krishnapuri Raja Annamalaipuram Madras-600028
6. Name and address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital. ... Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, Plot 292, Jayshankar Yagnik Marg, Bombay-400022.

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## Cultural Scene in Bombay

By

SULOCHANA RAJENDRAN

The festival season in Bombay this year had a unique start in Kalasadan's 6-day Second All India Sangeeta Natyakala Conference at the Bombay Tamil Sangam Hall in Sept-Oct. Unlike the first conference held in 1977, where a galaxy of eminent Natyacharyas and Natyamanis had gathered to present papers, demonstrations and performances and a certain amount of formality was maintained, the second was more informal and focussed on the younger generation for demonstrations as well as on the performing front. The one common factor that linked both the conferences was the confluence of all arts and a cultural vignette from vigorous Kathakali to soft Manipuri and included the two systems of Indian classical music—Hindustani and Karnatak.

#### Dr. Padma Subramaniam

The conference got off to an auspicious start with the first Lady of the State Begum Bilkees Latif, lighting the traditional lamp. Among the lecture demonstrations, Dr. Padma Subramaniam's was a detailed discourse covering a number of aspects in classical dance with special reference to what she herself specialises in i.e. Bharata Nrityam. The concept of Natya vis-a-vis the various regional styles which have evolved using the basic norms of Bharata's Natya Sastra, made an intelligent part of the demonstration.

Karnas. her forte, enlightened many. Though she expatiated elaborately on many aspects of Abhinaya, the delineations of Natya Dharmi vs Loka Dharmi left

many rather confused. But her short performance of "Ananda Natanamaduvur" (Purvikalyani) was crisp, chiselled and certainly 'cosmic' in delight and dimension.

#### Kathak

Sunayana Hazarilal, a Kathak exponent, gave a lecture demonstration as well as a performance on Kathak. The Natwari bols (quite different form Tabla bols usually deployed in Kathak form) in Sunayana's dynamic footwork spoke of the immense scope the dance form has in the plane of rhythm. Her performance was a rhythmic extravaganza right from the opening Durgavandana to the concluding Surdas' bhajan—a pure abhinaya score where too rhythm had its subtle intricacies. Tabala by Prabhu Dutt and bols by Hazarilal from the wings, finely harmonised with the footwork.

In a sequence where music, facial flexions and gestures were all modulated to effect the subtlety of bhava with a touch of real life expression. Dr. Natraj Ramkrishna of Andhra Pradesh Sangeet Natya Akademi brought to the fore the inner core of abhinaya from pieces like "Evvade Vadu", a Javali and a Padhyam (without any rhythmic support). Kumari Rama's mellifluous modulations added an aural bhava though with better clarity one would have enjoyed the sahitya.

#### Kuchipudi

Dr. Natraj's chela proved one better. It was 'he' cast in 'she' and what a rap-



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VISAKHAPATNAM

port he struck with the audience! One was sure that another star was born in the Kuchipudi firmament after that legendary Vedantam Satyanarayana Sarma, to carry on the Kuchipudi tradition in the dominant role of Satyabhama. It was excerpts from "Nava Janardhana Parijatham" that he presented. The story unfoldment, interspersed with mercurial nadai beda to the melody mixed with folk element, gave it a regional touch-pure Andhra Natya vintage Kuchipudi;

## Young artists

The rest of the dance performances were mostly by young and up coming artists with the exception of Smita Sastry (of Ahmedabad) who gave a scintillating Kuchipudi, the highlight of which was Mayura Kavuthvam. Students of Manipur Nartanalaya and of Darpana presented Manipuri and Kathakali Dr. Kanak Rele's group did Mohini attam Rajendran Sisters-Sucharita and Vinata. of Rajarajeshwari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir represented the traditional Thanjavur style of Bharata Natyam while the pick of the Kalasadan students presented a well-prepared and well-received ballet, "Tulasi Mahatmyam" at the Shanmukhananda Hall.

## Dr. Rajam

In the music sector Dr. N Rajam laid bare in a fine lecture-demonstration the distinctive features of and differences between the Hindi & Karnataka systems of Indian music. Her performance was marked by the predominant 'gayaki' style which has considerably mellowed her violin play. Behag featured most and through Khamaj Thumri, one heard the melodic yearnings of the soul of the instrument. Her daughter Sangeeta proved to be more than a chip adding her own to the elegance of the concert.

## Talk on Thyagaraja

The morning Tala-vadya demonstration by fledgelings of T. H. Vinayakram's institution were more arresting than the evening recital which turned out to be a vocal duet between a pair each of mridangam and ghatam. It was given to E. N. Purshothaman of Hyderabad, the author of the famous "Thyagopanisad" to share with the audience "The music that Tyagaraja cherished". His meticulously prepared paper had to be much abridged for want of time. He however gave glimpses of his erudition and experience through his excellent extempore talk.

## Yamini.

Veterans like Dr. Ginde-Bhatt, Sakuntala Narasimhan and Vijayalakshmi Nathan gave vocal recitals. The curtain was rung down on the Conference with a Bharata Natya recital by that angel of abhinaya, Yamini Krishnamurthy. The coy grace and charm that once characterised her dance were replaced by vigorous articulations, though she excelled in rhythmic complexities-right from the opening Ganesa kavuthyam to the concluding Tillana.

## Dr Ramanathan's Thyagaraja.

It was five years ago that one had "A day with Tyagaraja" through the melodic exposition and discourses presented by the erudite scholar-musician, Dr. S. Ramanathan at the Bharatiya Hall. The same at the Shanmukhananda-Mini, in October was ever fresh. In fact the discourse gains every time in depth and dimension.

Tracing the history of evolution of music, the veteran chronicled the day's chores in the saint's life of devotion from Thiruppalli Ezhuchchi ("Melukovayya") to the lullaby ("Jo Jo Rama"). He also

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expatiated on the salient features of the saint's compositions along with some interesting anecdotes making it more a musical discourse.

## Semmangudi

The 11-day Shanmukhananda annual Music-Dance-Drama fete started with veteran Semmangudi Srinivasaier's vintage vocal recital with accompanists V. V. Subramaniam (violin) and Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman (mridangam) toeing the maestro in fine-textured melody and soft-musical formulations. The maestro regaled the listeners with choice selections of his much familiar repertoire. In a concert of brief alapanas but vibrant niraval-swaraprastharas, one that stood towering was Todi and the Pallavi was typically in the maestro's style.

## Veena Dr. Balachandar

The Veena phenomenon, S. Balachandar, was the other musician to perform at the festival. The vainika in his explorative thrust delved deep into Ragas of elusive charm like Natai, Yedukula Khambodi etc. His Purvikalyani and "Ninnuvina" were aesthetic and artistic. Off explorative, he played some crisp compositions: "Lavanya Rama" (Purna Shadjam), "Theratheeyaga Raada" (Gowlipanthu).

Sivaraman was quite at home with the vainika's improvisations and his Thani placed him one up in the performance.

## The Whistler

Whistling his way into the hearts of the listeners, young whistler, Shivaprasad of Hyderabad did undo the stigma usually attached to 'whistling'. The novelty of the concert at the festival got audience appreciation and so far as kriti rendition was concerned, there was nothing to note

against it. But in Raga alapanas, high forays did present a hazard and the tone tended to screech. As the artiste rendered compositions of pulsating rhythm like "Brovabharama" (Bahudari), "Ninnuvina" (Navarasa Kannada), "Nagumomu" (Abheri) and a few Hindustani numbers and did not attempt major ragas like Kamboji, Todi or Kalyani nor improvised niraval and swaras, the worthiness of this medium which is near-flute like, could not well be gauged.

## Swapnasundari

The dance segment presented a fairly well known exponent, Swapna Sundari in a solo and a team of young students of Swamimalai Rajaratnam pillai in "Bharathathil Bharati". One of the shining stars of the kuchipudi firmament, Swapna Sundari could not scale that high in Bharata Natyam. The abandon she has in kuchipudi was conspicuously absent though she was sincere to the tenets and grammar of Bharata Natyam. There was a certain rigidity in place of continuity in her articulations and in abinaya she had recourse to lokadharmi. The repertoire too was heavy and disproportionate, with two Navaragamalika numbers in the first half against light Javalis and Tillanas in the second half.

## Bharathi in Bharatam

The nrityanjali to Bharati (one more in the city during the birth centenary of the poet) was colourful. The selections of verses many of which are popular, their musical setting and dance choreography reflected the mastercraftsman's aesthetic touch. With resonant musical support from Guru Rajaratnam who conducted the nattuvangam too, and Madurai Sethuraman, the production came off picturesquely from Alarippu to Tillana. The

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dancers, many of them with pleasant features and figure, were well groomed and poised. Sujata Srinivasan's grace and elegance were particularly noticeable.

The highlights were Malavika Sarukkai's Kalyanavasantham Tillana sung with the poet's adulation of "Nandalala" and Shoba Natarajan-Sujata Srinivasan's "Teerada vilayattu Pillai". Petite Malavika, a versatile dancer in Bharata Natyam and Odissi danced with professional aplomb. Shoba and Sujata made a dazzling duo as Gopi and Krishna. "Kannan Mananilayai" by Anuradha Jagannathan was elaborately choreographed into a Varnam with intricate adavu kandigais and imaginative swara sequences.

### Drama

The drama sector was shared by Komal Swaminathan's Stage Friends and Shantiniketan troupes. While the former's "Thanneer", "Oru Indiya Kanavu" and "Chekku Maadugal" were thought-provoking in theme, perspective in dramatic art, with a message to convey to the audience and a well-proportioned blend of dialogue, diction and acting, the latter's "Ragam, Thanam and Pallavi", "Mudal Mariyadai" and "Thodarum Adhyayam" provided good entertainment with some serious acting.

Between the Shanmukhananda and the Bharatiya's festivals, Bombayites had a memorable and enjoyable experience long to be cherished :] Balaji Kalyanotsav.

### Lord Venkateswara

The Shanmukhananda Hall that goes pop quite often was transformed into a shrine, a mini Tirupati with a full-size idol of Sri Venkateswara in all grandeur and gaiety, flanked by Utsava murthy and Sita-

Rama-Lakshmana vigrahas decorating the gaily bedecked stage. What a thrill it was when the whole temple rituals at Tirupati (the Tirumanjana abhisheka, Alankara seva, Netra darshan and the elaborate Kalyana festivities to the auspicious strains of Nadaswaram) were gone through in a two-day festival!

Interspersed with the rituals were devotional music and dance recitals. Though much of the music leaned on 'light' stuff save Balamuralikrishna, Jalota and Anuradha Poudwal and Malavika Sarukkai's brilliant Bharata Natyam, Bombayites did not mind sitting through several hours each day. Kudos to Bharat Cultural Integration Committee for arranging such a 'divine vision'.

### Nedunuri in Form

The inaugural and the only music recital at the Annual Festival of Bharatiya Music and Arts Society by Nedunuri Krishnamurthy proved a rewarding experience. Sriranjani, Mukhari and Todi figured in the programme with "Marubalga", "Muripemu" and Adi Tala Pallav respectively in all their original splendour, to our heart's content supported ably by M. Chandrasekhar (violin) and Guruvayur Dorai (Mridangam). His concert rose to aesthetic heights.

CHO and his Vivek Fine Arts enacted three of their popular hits and Mauli's troupe billed for another three. The dance sessions are to be shared by Lakshmi Viswanathan and Hema Malini.

### M. L. Vasanthakumari Shines

The Deepavali-eve concert by Sangeetha Kalanidhi M. L. Vasanthakumari for the Shanmukhananda Sabha had all the fire and sparkle of her style. Sankara-

bharanam and Suddha Dhanyasi were the main ragas she essayed and with charming designs and original artistry. "Akshayalingavibho" and the intricate Pallavi in Tisra Jhampa, the laghu in Khanda nadai and Anudritha and Dhru-tham in Chatusram were solid fare amidst a variety of kritis rendered with aesthetic sensibility. Kanyakumari (violin), Mannar-gudi Easwaran (mridangam) and Harishan- kar (kanjira) accompanied with skilled understanding, making the recital a richly rewarding experience.

### Swathi Tirunal Kalashetram

At a time when the music world is plagued with a controversy about the au- thorship of Swati Tirunal's Karnatak com- positions, it needed courage on the part of Swati Tirunal Kalashetram in the city to have presented a Bharat Natya recital featuring the Maharaja's Hindustani

compositions at the Bombay Tamil Sangam Hall. The Kalashetram also pre- sented in its Navarathri festival Professor K. S. Narayanaswamy in a Veena recital, besides Kalyani Sarma and Susheela in vocal recitals.

For the efforts put in for choreograph- ing Dhru-pads, Bhajans and Tarana into proper Bharata Natya format adapting sancharis to bol taans and inducting sargams to suit the number such as Varnam, Anjani Arunkumar and her sister Prerna Desai should be complimented.

"Sankara Srigurunath" (Gowri) as opening invocatory number provided for cosmic dance, Dhru-pad "Aaj Uninde Chale Aye" (Vibhas) served as Varnam and "Nandanandana" (Khamas) etc., was treated to padam. A worthwhile endeavour.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Thyagaraja and Ramadas

Sir,

I read the article on the above subject in a recent issue of "Shanmukha". Thyagaraja imbibed a lot from Purandara- dasa and Ramadas whom he held in high esteem. A close study will bring out many places where he pays homage to these masters. It is relevant to add the following to what has been already said

on the subject. In his Todi Kriti "Brinda- vana lola", Thyagaraja calls himself "Ramadasadasa". In the Saranga Kriti "Emi dova balku", Thyagaraja feeling desperate to get Rama's grace, says "where can I go? Had it been Ramadas Sita would have put in a word!"

MADRAS

S. PARTHASARATHI

## The Sabha's Activities

### Dr. Sharma Lauds Medical Education Programme

Refresher courses in medicine should be a regular event to keep the "family- physician" abreast of events occurring in the world of medicine, according to Dr. K. D. Sharma, Director of Medical Education and Research, Government of Maharashtra.

Inaugurating the programme of Conti- nuing Medical Education for the benefit of the General Practitioners in Medicine in Bombay, organised by the Shanmukha- nanda Medical Centre, at the air-condi- tioned Mini-Auditorium on 24th October 1982, Dr. Sharma lauded the efforts of the sabha in organising such functions and promised to strive to do his best to obtain full financial and moral support from his Directorate.

Earlier, in his Welcome Address, Prof. T. V. Ramanujam, Ex-Sheriff of Bombay, said that the Sabha's Medical Centre had done Yeoman service to people (residing in the Sion/Matunga/Wadala/Dadar area), by offering them the services of leading "specialists" for consultancy service, pathological examinations and X-Ray services etc. at highly concessional rates.

### Scientific Session

The scientific session for the day began with an address on the "Manage- ment of Diabetes" by Dr. V. S. Ajgaonkar. In his detailed analysis of the causes, effects and treatment of the disease, Dr. Ajgaonkar stressed on the need of edu- cating patients in their disease, attending to their diet, and monitoring the symptoms regularly, and periodically instructing the patient to assess the status of his or

her ailment. The role of *new* insulin produced by genetic engineering and the role of insulin pumps was also discussed by Dr. Ajgaonkar in his talk. With proper care, regulated diet, and careful check-up, a diabetic could live as long as any ordinary individual, he concluded.

Next Dr. Ravishankar spoke on the topic "Management of Headaches", and said that Headaches could be classified as *serious* or *chronic*, and *recurrent*, depend- ing on their severity and incidence. Dr. Ravishankar outlined the need for a *careful* study of the history of *each* case, making detailed examination and intelli- gent use of investigation facilities, to detect the cause of headache in individuals. Migraine was the commonest cause of headache, and occurred much more frequently than was routinely suspected. Quoting Sir William Osler, Dr. Ravishankar said that treating a patient for headache was one of the most *challenging* aspects of medical diagnosis and treatment.

Recent advances in Neurology with the use of computerised Axial Tomography was next discussed by Dr. S. M. Katrak. Sectional pictures of the skull and brain could clearly reveal the presence of any intracranial pathologies, he said, adding that this investigation has vastly improved the quality of diagnosis of brain diseases. In his well-illustrated talk using slides of excellent quality, Dr. Katrak demonstrated the use of this new tool. With the avai- lability of Scanners for the whole body, diagnosis would further improve, he added.

Hypertension was extremely common in India and one should take the blood pressure of every individual who comes to meet a doctor, in his interesting and instructive address Dr. S. Ramamoorthy advised the Medicos. There were several drugs available to treat this common ailment, but the physician should use his discretion and use them in a way to suit the socio-economic needs of the patient, he concluded.

Dr. P. B. Pahlajani, who spoke on Coronary Artery Disease, as the last talk in the symposium, said that early diagnosis and prompt treatment were the only two methods to reduce the morbidity and mortality due to angina and heart attacks. Commenting on the role of "coronary bypass surgery" Dr. Pahlajani said that there were several patients who could benefit from surgery, and the physician and the public should not get carried away by the spate of criticism being heaped on this useful method of treating a very painful affliction.

The symposium concluded with a session on questions put to the speakers from the audience.

Mr. N. Parameswaran, Convenor, Medical Centre Sub-Committee of Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, proposed a vote of thanks.

#### Felicitations

1. The renowned Veena Maestro Shri S. Balachander was felicitated by Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha and sister-Institutions in Bombay on 31st October 1982, at its Mini Auditorium, on his being conferred the "Padma Bhushan" Award in 1982 by the President of the Indian Union. Dr. V. Subramanian, Minister for Energy, Transport and plan-

ning, Maharashtra, and President of the Shanmukhananda Sabha, presided.

Prominent speakers at the function were Prof. T. V. Ramanujam, Ex-Sheriff of Bombay, Sangeetha Kalanidhi Shri K. S. Narayanaswamy, Principal of the Shanmukhananda Sabha's Sangeetha Vidyalaya, Sangeetha Vidwans Sarvashri Trichi Swaminatha Iyer and Alathoor A. S. Panchapakesa Iyer, all of whom spoke of the brilliance and versatility of Shri Balachander. Sarvashri R. Muthuswamy and S. Ravindran also paid high tributes to the Vaineeka.

Dr. Balachander, while thanking the Organisers for honouring him, said that he will continue to draw inspiration from the Trinity of Carnatic Music and the leading limelights in the field, past and present.

2. Dr. V. Narayana Menon, an eminent personality of many years' standing in the world of music and the Executive Director of the National Centre for Performing Arts, Bombay, and the Chairman-Designate of the Sangeet Natak Academy, New Delhi, was felicitated by Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha and sister Institutions at its Mini-Auditorium, on 7th November 1982. Dr. V. Subramanian, Cabinet Minister, Maharashtra, and President of the Sabha, presided on the occasion.

Dr. V. Subramanian, Prof. T. V. Ramanujam, Sangeetha Kalanidhi Shri K. S. Narayanaswamy and Shri A. Kandaswamy while eulogising the services rendered by Dr. Narayana Menon in the cause of music, both Indian and Western in general and Indian classical music in particular, explained the various facets of Dr. Narayana Menon's splendid career and achievements.

Dr. Narayana Menon, while expressing his thanks to the organisers for honouring him, reaffirmed his will to continue to serve the cause of good music in the years to come too.

#### Bharati Portrait unveiled

Presiding over a Dance Ballet on "Bharathathil Bharathi", based exclusively on Poet Subramanya Bharathi's songs by Rajaraatnalaya Bharatha Kalai Koodam, Madras, which was arranged by the Sabha on the 31st October 1982, as a part of its Annual Music, Dance and Drama Festival, in commemoration of Bharathi Centenary Celebrations, Prof. T. V. Ramanujam unveiled the portrait of Shri Subramanya Bharathi donated to the Sabha by Bharathi Kala Manram, Bombay.

#### Exhibition and Demonstration of Musical Instruments

Under the joint auspices of Sri Shanmukhananda Sabha and the Development Centre for Musical Instruments (Sangita Vadyalaya) Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, an Exhibition and Demonstration of Musical Instruments was inaugurated by Dr. V. Subramanian, Cabinet Minister, Maharashtra, and the President of our Sabha, on Sunday the 14th November 1982.

Dr Subramanian said on the occasion that it was a rare opportunity to the lovers of music and of musical instruments in Bombay not only to have a glimpse of rare musical instruments but also to hear the

beautiful notes and sounds flowing from them while being demonstrated by the experts. Dr. T. Lokanadha Sarma, Director, Development Centre for Musical Instruments, Government of India, Madras, explained the salient features of some instruments, the origin of which is only a bamboo. He thanked the Sabha for their initiative in organising the Exhibition for the first time in the City of Bombay and particularly Shri K. S. Mahadevan, Editor, 'Shanmukha' Magazine of the Sabha, for assisting in holding this rare Exhibition.

Prof. T. V. Ramanujam welcomed the gathering. Shri N. Parameswaran proposed a vote of thanks.

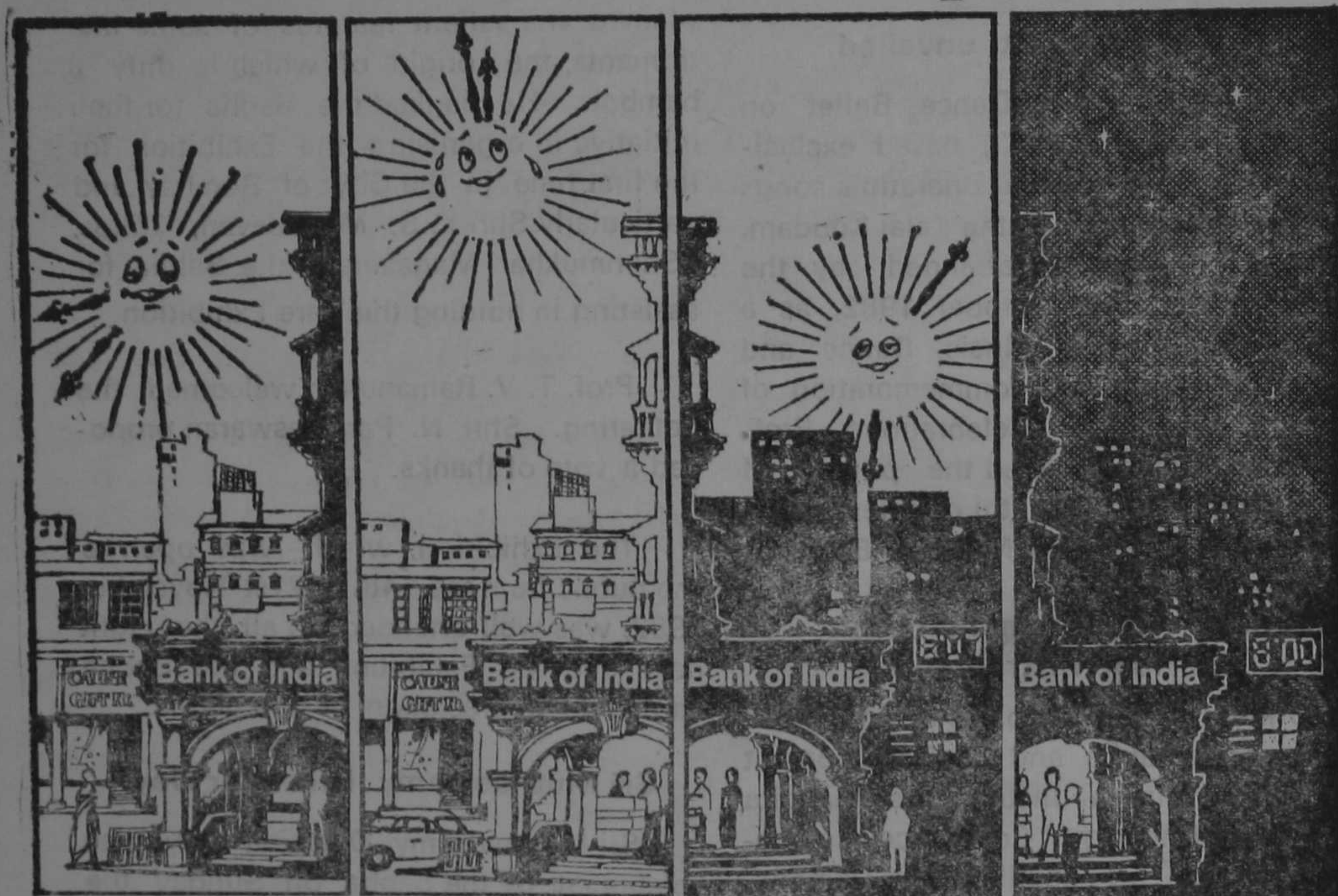
The Exhibition, which was open to the public from the 14th to 21st November 1982, was well-attended on all the eight days and the Exhibition and the Sabha earned the appreciation of the public.

#### Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar Day

Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar Day was celebrated by the Sabha on Sunday the 28th November 1982 between 9 a.m. and 12 noon at its Mini Auditorium. Dikshitar kritis were rendered on the occasion by the Principal of the Sabha's Sangeetha Vidyalaya Sangeetha Kalanidhi Shri K. S. Narayanaswamy and the other staff members and students of the Vidyalaya and Bombay Vidwans with suitable accompaniments.

S. SESHADRI,

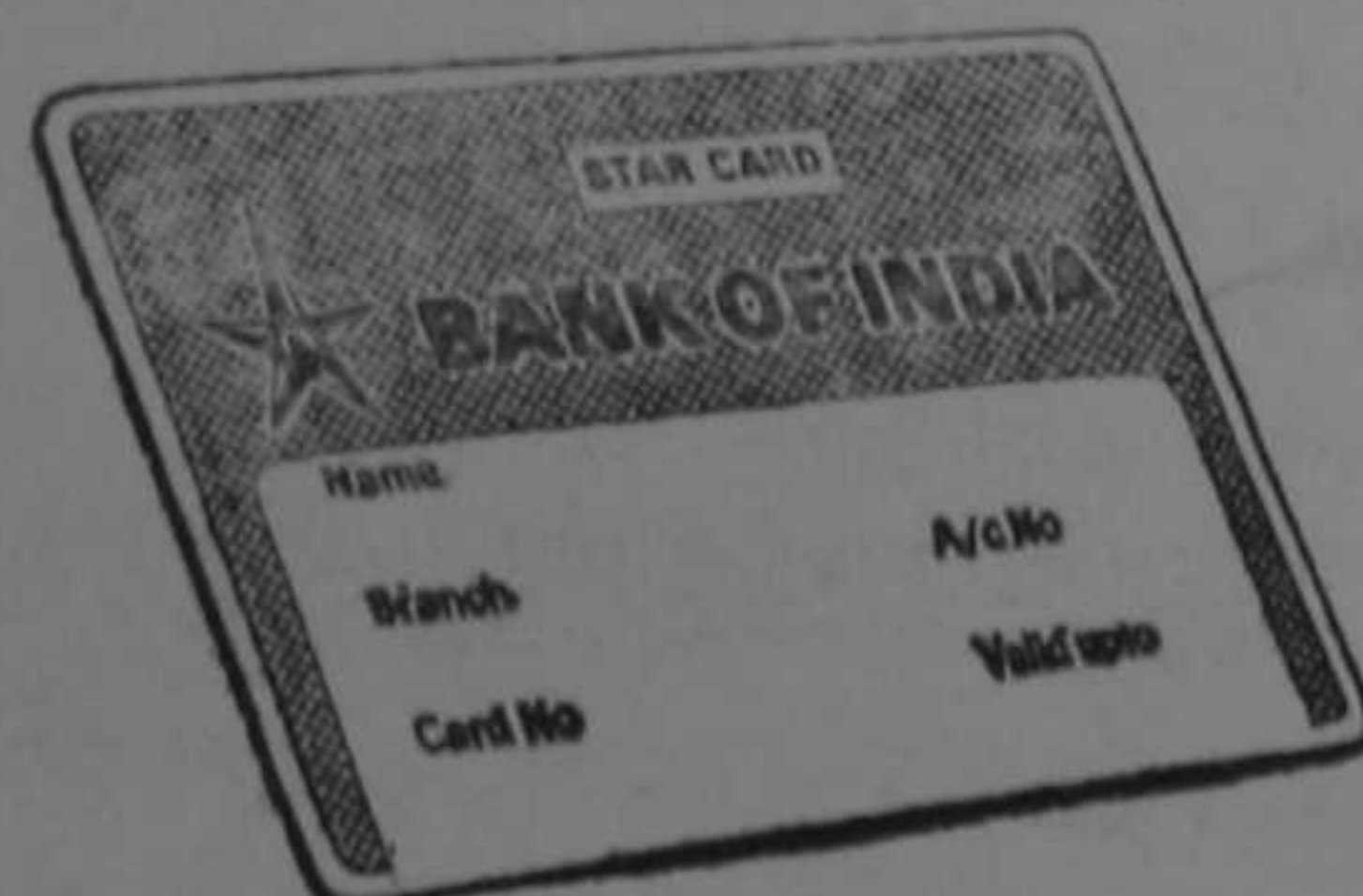
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## Carnatic music in America

### Interview With Jon Higgins

The educational philosophy of the Wesleyan University at Middletown, U.S.A. is that the ARTS deserve a Central place in today's liberal institutions. It responded to the unprecedented growth in student interest in music, theatre and art courses, by opening in 1973 the Centre for the Arts which is housed in a 11-building complex, set amidst serene, vernal surroundings. Since then, enrolment in music and other courses has risen steadily. To us in India, it is a matter for pride that teaching Carnatic music is now a key faculty in the Centre and courses in vocal, violin, and mridangam are offered and taken by many foreign students.

Jon Higgins is a name to conjure with, not only because he flowered into a first-rate Carnatic musician but he is also the present Director of the prestigious Centre for the Arts, an office both demanding in its requirements and exalted in stature. By

dint of hard work, he has risen to this position. An invitation from him to this writer to visit the Wesleyan was gratefully accepted. The visit confirmed the very good work that is being carried on for years by such stalwarts as Messrs. T. Viswanathan, T. Ranganathan and Higgins himself.

Jon Higgins spent a few months in India recently, attended many concerts and gave some concerts, too. His views on certain aspects of the *mise en scene* of the present day Carnatic music culture would, we hope, be read with interest, coming from a virtuoso who is musically alert and intellectually stimulating. The views set down below were elicited through questions put to him by the writer.

#### Question & Answer.

*Jon: Glancing through the list of questions handed to him).* Your questions cover a wide range. As an American coming



Mr. Jon Higgins in his office

once in a while to India, my studies were limited. I feel my own inadequacy in providing any understanding or wisdom that you don't have yourself. Still, I shall try.

*Question:* What were the more important changes that you witnessed in the structure, content and execution of concerts you attended in India recently?

#### A New Era

*Jon:* I felt the passing off of the stalwarts. It is a different era now. Though younger musicians are taking their place, I feel the gap. The personal charisma, the force and authority of the earlier generation, represented by stalwarts like Ariakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, G. N. B., Madurai Mani etc. are missing. Of course, Dr. Semmangudi is still in our midst, singing as well as ever. They so dominated the musical scene that younger musicians of talent did not get much chance to come up. Nowadays, a number of artists are stepping squarely in the shoes of their masters e. g. K. V. Narayanaswami, T. M. Thiagarajan, Santhanam, T.N. Seshagopalan, N. Ramani etc. Among these, I noticed a greater tendency to perform works of living or recent composers.

*Question:* You would have noticed a trend towards elaboration of new ragas, especially the vivadi melas, in concerts lately. Have you yourself experimented with such ragas?

*Jon:* I am still so much a student. Naturally, I tend to take the advice of my teacher, Mr. T. Viswanathan. He has no strict code in such matters. But my own interest is to learn more compositions, in the traditional ragas, that are deeper and broad-based, to get inside them, so to speak.

One of the problems for anybody, especially a foreigner, in raga alapana is the lack of experience with enough compositions—the wonderful, sterling pieces—to bring their vocabulary to bear upon experience and to learn from them the principles of their organisation. In my humble opinion, some of the new compositions, especially in the apurva ragas, lack the depth of the older compositions, because presumably the new ragas don't have enough scope. People understand such ragas perhaps only in terms of their scale, because there is not a broad enough repertory of compositions of merit to develop such ragas' feel and character. I feel that, to the extent that a raga can be understood only in relation to its components (the scale), it is not even a raga. It is a skeleton, an inventory but not yet a musical reality.

*Question:* From your overall experience of learning and teaching, where would you lay greater stress as between raga alapana, kriti and tala. Will you subscribe to the opinion that the balance between those components has lately been disturbed?

#### Raga, the Taproot

*Jon:* It would be presumptuous of me to make a judgement. I am not yet close to attaining the requisite ability, the expressive capacity, in these areas. But in terms of my own development, I can confess that the toughest challenge was, and is still, in the area of raga alapana. True, years ago, in some ways the challenge was in swara development. Now I wonder at my own progress in that area. One can't separate raga and swaraprasthara; after all, the really beautiful swarakalpana is in itself an alapana in metre. If you have some one who sings very elaborate rhythmic clusters of swaras but pays little attention to the subtle, melodic character of a raga, what

good is it? My own teacher, Mr. T. Viswanathan, is very strong in laya, but raga melody is never sacrificed. In the ultimate analysis, raga is the tap root of the art.

*Question:* In your recent visit to India, did you observe any new trends in swara singing, the liberal use of laya patterns, and particularly, the adoption of fast tempi generally?

*Jon:* One of the earliest lessons I learnt was that there is a particular Kalapramana for each Kriti and it should be adhered to. Occasionally, liberties are taken with this gospel. It is my impression however, visiting India after so many years, that there is less routine presentation of Ragam, Tanam, Pallavi. There was also some competent handling of laya patterns in swara singing (though sometimes rather attuned to percussive formulae).

As regards Vilamba Kala, very few musicians now adopt it, since presumably it requires a high degree of control, understanding and technique. It is an instinct on the part of the person who has not attained competence in handling vilamba kala, to fill up the time intervals. Relatively, a faster pace is easier to handle and I suppose, except a few, the generality of listeners prefers a madhya or dhurita kala pramana way of singing. Of course, a successful concert is one in which Vilamba kala, Madhyama kala and Dhurita kala are mixed judiciously in the presentations.

*Question:* What do you feel about developments on the percussion side of concerts as accompaniment etc.?

*Jon:* When I look at the science of percussion developed as a fine art by Palghat Mani Jyer, Sivaraman, Rama-

badran, Raghu, Karaikudi Mani, Trichy Sankaran, T.K. Murthy and others, I see the genius in musical expressivity through rhythm at play. It is beautifully balanced and combined and is a rich contribution from India to the art and science of rhythm.

I find that the challenge to a good mridangist is just incredible. Not only has he to develop his skill in laya, he has to play to complex compositions, be prepared to improvise on any situation at a moment, he has to know also the sahitya of the pieces to enhance the effect by suitably phrasing the mridangam. Pregnant pauses are the hall mark of great mridangists. The mediocre tend to fill in as if following the rule 'when in doubt, play something'. To me, mridangam represents the highest art of percussion in any musical culture.

*Question:* What is your opinion about the style of playing of instrumentalists?

*Jon:* The efficiency of an instrumentalist has, in my view, something to do with the extent to which he has been trained as a vocalist. My teacher, Viswa, was trained in the vocalist idiom, hence his mastery of the flute. The same applies to Veena players. Dhanammal was the greatest exponent of the vocal and veena style, as you know.

*Question:* Have the standards of performing declined in Carnatic music, as is lamented by some? Has democratisation affected the quality of music purveyed?

*Jon:* Throughout the history of music every older generation has always said that. What does this complaint mean? How is the comparison made? It has not happened in Western music. At least in Carnatic music, you have a certain format

classical traditions, repertoire etc. to view it realistically. I have certainly noticed that the world of All India Radio, Door-darshan, the work of musicologists in developing a curriculum, have all definitely increased the number of people who, at least in their minds, know something about music. It may be that at times they go on pontificating without knowing deeply about the subject. But at the same time, this depth and its significance to the culture, this greater accessibility in the long run, can only be for the positive good of the people and the strengthening of the stream of musical tradition.

For one thing, it gives the broader range of people a sense of identity, something in common, a sense of exposure to the greatness of their culture in the face of modernisation and the impact of Western influences, of economic changes, not to speak of factors like dispersal of family, break-up of the traditional sources of identity. There is enough tradition in musicians to make them a strong cementing influence on society.

*Question:* As an ethno-musicologist, how do you visualise music as an expression of a society's culture?

*Jon:* In my chosen field of ethno-musicology, we lay stress on seeing music not just as music, but as a symbol or function of the socio-cultural situation, of the broader human experience.

A question often asked by parents who have moved from India to U. S. or Canada is: how can we maintain our children's contacts with their culture and tradition? Almost inevitably, culture is stated in terms of music. The one phenomenon of culture which somehow incorporates all that is important to him in religion and culture is music. There is also a core of dedicated professionals in this country.

Some Indian artists touring U. S. and Canada do not seem to know Indian music in depth - they give that impression, any way. They underestimate the ability of even a lay, uneducated audience to size up an artist-even an American audience without deep knowledge, which knows quality when it sees it. You really sell the tradition short if you compromise on quality. My teacher and his great family never yielded to that temptation, yet they are so successful in their mission.

On this subject, I am reminded of an illuminating remark from my father, a physician who passed away a few weeks ago in his eighties. He told me once: "When I taught young doctors resident in hospital, I found they wanted to do this, or that, they wanted to experiment on their patients. But I told them (1) never do any tests on a patient for research if it does not benefit him (2) always remember that the patient may not know medicine, but he knows if you know medicine".

*Question:* Can you comment in detail on the work of the teachers of Carnatic music resident in America or Canada?

*Jon:* The fact that there are sources of learning Carnatic music in U.S. and in Canada (e.g. Wesleyan, Toronto University) and students can avail themselves of the excellent facilities offered at these centres is very important, in the context of the exposition of Indian culture. The source of all this is the commitment on the part of Indian artists themselves, who have chosen to uproot themselves from their country, facing so many hardships, taking up residence at the University facing rigours of climate, adapting to changed food habits and *milieu* making many adjustments in short, to teach, or to give concerts. It is a real sacrifice, especially as some of them can very well afford to stay back home.

Incidentally, I may tell you that the ways of teaching and learning are different here - students here will ask seemingly rude questions, which they dare not do in India.

I can name about a dozen of such teachers who have come out here on such missions-Balasaraswathi, K. V. Narayanaswami, Dr. Ramanathan, Prof. T.N. Krishnan, V. Thiagarajan, V. Nagarajan, Trichy Sankaran, Palghat Raghu, Ramnad Raghavan, the late Rangaramanuja Iyengar, Smt. T. Brinda, and last but not least, my guru Viswa and his brother T. Ranganathan. The fact that all these musicians made, are making, the sacrifice I just mentioned is a testimonial to the importance they attach to educating the world outside their own country on Indian music culture.

*Question:* As a musicologist yourself, have you any views on the possible cross-fertilising influences on Carnatic music from other cultures?

*Jon:* What I have just said above is in interesting contrast to what seems to me the relative imperviousness of South Indian music to the musical influences from cultures in other parts of the world. Your tradition has developed in such a way - in such a culturally idiosyncratic way - that in many ways, traditional musicians felt or feel they have little to learn from others.

Younger musicians do try (even if they are banged on the head for deviating from orthodoxy). The present form and content of Carnatic music, were largely prepared and composed in the 18th century. Yet, in the 20th century, it remains the same. Why are we not evolving and changing? This tradition is so rich, so internally strong, with so much internal cohesion that it can perhaps afford to take in the influences of the outside world.

*Question:* Would you say the same thing about classical Western music? For instance, are Bach, Handel, Mozart and Beethoven not played in the same way as decades ago?

*Jon:* True, these great masters have written down the music. But the interpretation of the score has many schools. The instruments have changed a great deal. The piano of today is completely different; violin and clarinet have changed; some like the clavichord have gone out; the size of the whole ensemble has increased greatly, the same old instruments are now played with very different values. I am absolutely certain that Mozart's music, for example, is not being played, as it was centuries ago.

*Question:* Classical Hindusthani music seems to enjoy greater patronage in your country than the Carnatic. Many Americans flock to their recitals. Attendances at Carnatic Music recitals by visiting musicians are comparatively much less. How do you view this development?

*Jon:* You have to look at the exposure in this country where, I am sorry to say, "Indian music" means the Sitar, to a lot of people. Maestros Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar were the first two Indian musicians to be introduced in this country-way back in 1950, I think. In 1960, when I heard Ravi, he had also cut a number of records. Hindustani music had this head-start, one must admit.

On the other hand, the music that has taken hold more strongly in educational institutions in U. S. is the Carnatic system, though concert-wise, there may not be much public demand for it yet.

Personally, I like Hindustani music too and if I can have a second life, I would take to Hindustani music too for study



**Question:** Have you any suggestions for promoting the appreciation of music, its finer points, aesthetics and ethos?

**Jon:** I feel there are not enough schools to teach appreciation of music. Here in Wesleyan, I do teach an appreciation class or rather, I try to. You see, my students have never studied music of any kind. Some are Western and some are Viswa-trained. Hence, I give a two-part instruction on (i) History of music (2) Role musicians play in society. (3) I introduce them to tape recordings and the basic repertoire such as Varnam, Kriti, Jawali etc. Thus, they get a basic understanding of technique, how to relate to shruthi etc. They try basic music themselves.

**Question:** Before we conclude this interview, could you recall some interesting experience, while under the tutelage of members of the Dhanam family?

**Jon:** Certainly. In the first place, theirs is a different style of ornamentation. They have superb craftsmanship and take pride in it. They believe in voice culture and won't allow any false note. They are very thorough. I will tell you an interesting experience of mine. It was in 1965, my second year of study under Viswa. I was then learning "Endaro Mahanubhavalu", the great Pancharatna kriti, and slogging at its profusion of sahitya and swara, so many variations of gait. Came the Thiagaraja festival and I asked my mentor Viswa whether I might sing this piece. He asked me to sing it before

him. Believe me, he had to teach me all over again, every single section of it. Then only I sang at the festival. This incident taught me that we are always in the process of learning. Perfection is not easy to come by.

**Interviewer:** On behalf of the readers of "SHANMUKHA", the Shanmukhananda Sabha and myself, I tender you my warm thanks for your graciously acceding to my request to grant this interview. You have been most obliging and given us very interesting glimpses from your own apprenticeship and study and your deeply analytical understanding and comprehension of Carnatic music.

**Jon:** Thank you. I appreciate your coming and taking time off to discuss in some depth some important aspects of Carnatic music. I enjoyed this interview as much as you. It will be a pleasure for me to show you round our Centre For Arts.

I have pleasant memories of long and happy association with the Shanmukhananda Sabha. I shall never forget my performances in the magnificent auditorium of this wonderful institution, especially my initial shock when I was told I had to sing concerts on two consecutive days, a thing I was just not accustomed to, at that stage. Please convey to all my colleagues in the Sabha my sincere Greetings for a Happy, New Year and my best wishes.

K. S. Mahadevan



## Carnatic percussion merges with Rock & Jazz

For over sixteen years, the Karnataka College of Percussion, established by Mr. T. A. S. Mani\* at Bangalore, has been rendering yeoman service to Indian music, by imparting intensive training to students on the various percussion instruments of India and also by extraordinary feats of promotion of the art in the international field of Rhythm, through visits to U. K. and Europe and exchange of visits with similar artists from various parts of the world. The Indian Council of Cultural Relations in 1980 sponsored these percussionists for participation in the Shrewsbury International Music Festival and the Bracknell and Milton Keynes Jazz Festivals in England.

On 19th July 1980, at the Great Central Hall of Westminster, London, "VOICE of INDIA" presented a "Festival of Indian Rhythms" under the patronage of the Rt. Hon. Kenneth, Chairman Arts Council of Great Britain. In 1981, Mani's group under the name "Tala Tarangini" had a very successful concert tour of U. K., West Germany and Switzerland, blending Indian music with Western.

### Talatarangini

Such great international stars as Mr. Charlie Mariano (Saxophone), Mr. Maynard Ferguson of Canada (a leading trumpet player) and Mr. George Golla from Australia have, besides collaborating with "Talatarangini" in Jazz festivals in Europe and U. K., visited India and given public concerts too. The credit for "Talatarangini"'s astounding feats in India and overseas must go equally to Mrs. Ramamani, the Vice-Principal of the College of Percussion at Bangalore, who

holds a Postgraduate degree in music from Bangalore University and in whose vein "laya" is coursing as intensely and as blood. Mrs. Ramamani is capable of singing Avidhana "Pallavis" (Pallavi sung with two entirely different tala structures in each hand done simultaneously) with fluid ease and impeccably too. Not many successful platform musicians can claim this knack. In fact, her demonstration of a complicated "Avidhana" Pallavi in Bhairavi raga was one of the highlights of the 14th Music Conference of the Bangalore Gayana Samaja in November '82 and elicited high praise from the great laya vidvans present.



Mrs. Ramamani

How the *Heterologue de Percussion* actually functions in collaboration with Western artists is as follows :

### The Method

The performance starts with an invocatory piece by the vocalist (generally, Mrs. Ramamani) in a Carnatic raga

\* Mr. Mani is the grandson of the famous Anantharama Bhagavathar of Palghat.

(e.g. Kuntalavarali). She controls the rhythm by selected patterns of rhythmic cycles and by giving solfa syllables of the tala (Konnakol) to enhance the effect. Thereon, each of the other percussionists in turn plays on his instrument such as Mridangam, Ghatam, Kanjira, Dholak, Dholki, Khol, Pakwaj, Dhol, Morsing and Konnakol (vocalised rendering of the rhythmic syllables, a real tongue-twister), with slight adaptations to suit the individual nature of each instrument. Several rounds of the tala are played in this manner and in the last stage, the entire *ensemble* blends harmoniously, leading up to a dazzling finale of sound and rhythm, which brings the house down in sheer, bemused astonishment at the virtuosity of it all. Mr. Mani's *metier* lies in his ability to adopt innovative techniques and strike out on new paths, rescuing tala presentation from its mechanical aspect. No wonder, the troupe captured the hearts of thousands of music fans in England and Europe (especially Germany) who were deeply impressed by the ardent, intelligent music-making of the troupe, wholly convincing in its sense of fulfilment. Unlike music *per se*, percussion can be analysed intellectually and its pulsating rhythms experienced individually so that comprehension is easier than in vocal Indian music, especially for foreigners.

#### Encomiums

Needless to say, the pioneering efforts of Mr. Mani, his wife and his other colleagues, evoked high encomiums from musicians abroad.

Professor Blade of the Royal Academy of Music called the performance at the Royal Academy of Music, London an "Unforgettable experience".

Maynard Ferguson (Trumpet-player of U.S.) felt it was "fantastic".

OKay Temiz of Sweden called it a "wonderful percussion programme".

(The President of the International Music Society said "many people are still talking about the concert".

N. Gerov of Bulfario said it was "tip-top".

Mr. John Skinner, Secretary of the Council of International Contact (Patrons: Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Mr. James Callaghan, Mr. David Steel, Director George M. Gowan) in a letter of appreciation written to Mr. Mani in August 1980 said: "We were very privileged to welcome you to England.....you were the stars of the festival. You delighted hundreds of people in Shrewsbury with your Tala Tarangini". We invite you to attend one of our festivals next year (1981) : the Harrogate International Youth Music Festival, International Aberdeen Music festival or Shrewsbury Youth Festival. We would be most privileged to welcome you to any of these festivals and indeed to help you with any other concert arrangements in Britain or Europe."

The world indeed is pretty quick these days to catch the flavour of true originality in art and the "Tala Tarangini" troupe of Mr. Mani and his brilliant wife, has truly hoisted aloft the flag of Indian percussion in the international field of jazz and rock.

#### Offbeat, Unique

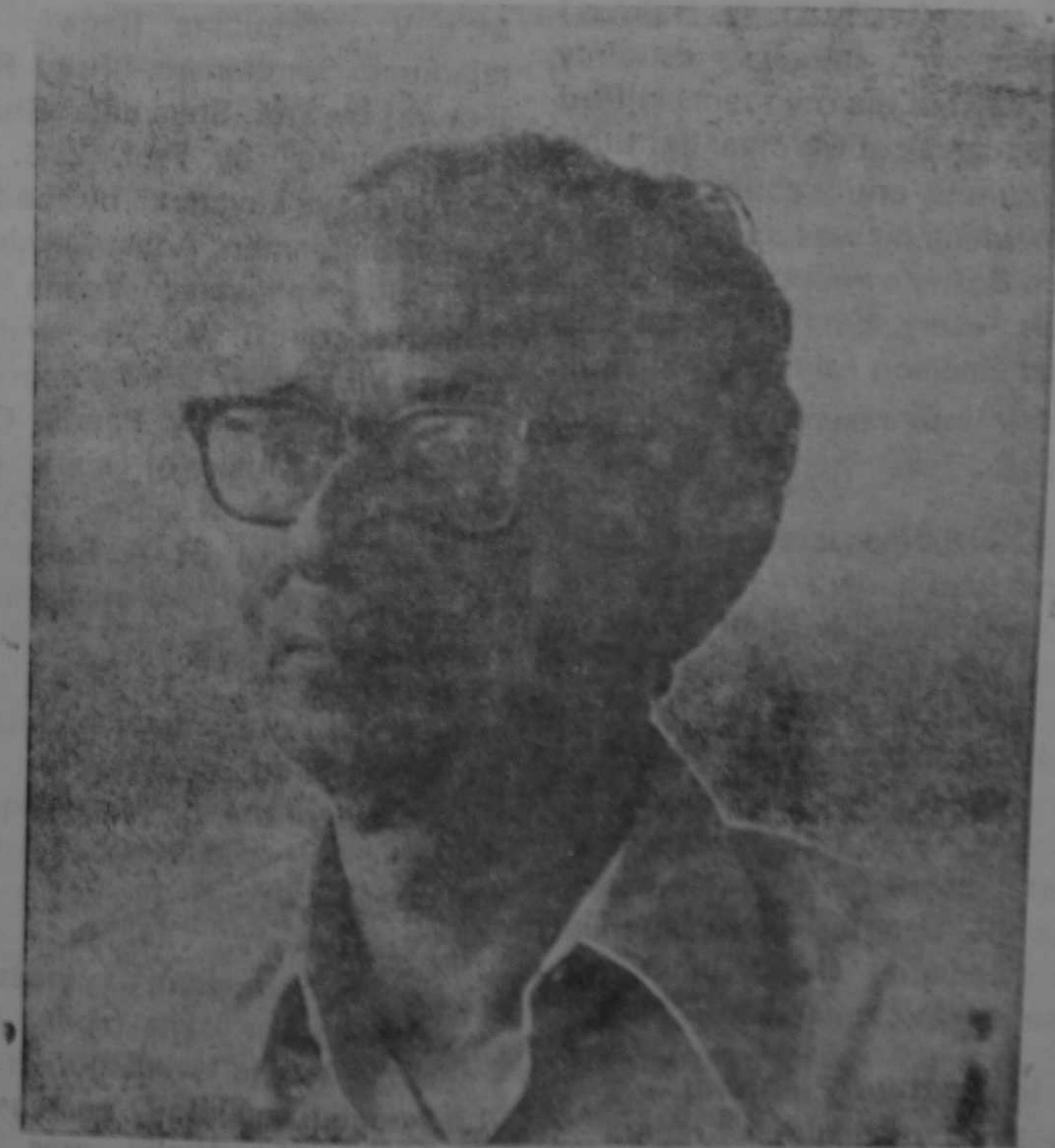
In a similar way, Ananda Shankar (Son of the great Uday Shankar) has experimented with the guitar, the sitar, the tabla and other Indian and Western instruments, and evolved his now famous orchestra playing Indian melodies to the rock beat - something new that appeals to the young and the old, the orthodox and the sophisticated. Like Ananda, Mrs. Ramanani and Mr. Mani have produced music that is unique, off-beat, but not vulgar or flashy. May their tribe increase! One can only wonder at the vast potentialities our melodic and rhythmic systems have.

'LAYAGNANA'

## The Bangalore Gayana Samaja's Fourteenth Music Conference

Born on 5th August 1905, this veteran of Sabhas in our country has taken giant strides in organising not only music concerts but Annual Music Conferences of an extremely useful and even memorable character. Indeed, one of the heartening features of the music scene in the South is the increasing popularity of such conferences, betokening a striking advance in appreciation of the finer aspects of music. Only a few Sabhas, however convene these public forums, due probably to financial constraints.

The parameters, of an efficient Music Conference are three: (1) the themes of the papers presented should be related to a basic understanding of the ethos and merits of music in general and to the precise contribution of the composers and experts of the region (2) the authors of the papers should have first-hand acquaintance with the subject and be specialists preferably (3) last, certainly not the least, the Conference Chairman must, by knowledge and training, have both a comprehensive sweep of the matters discussed and



SRI. P. V. K. SASTRY

an incisive ability to place them in correct perspective. Such a Chairman alone can endow the discussions with continuous vitality and sustain public interest in what after all is mainly food for the intellect.

#### Sri B. V. K. Sastry

In Sri B. V. K. Sastry, the 14th annual Music Conference of the Samaja, inaugurated by Shri V. K. R. V. Rao on 31-11-82, had an ideal President, with an enviable range of accomplishments such as erudition, musical alertness, clarity of perception, critical faculty and instinctive taste. In the introduction to each paper and in the final summing-up of each discussion (too often routinely done at most conferences) Sri Sastry's "blessed clairvoyance which sees into things without opening them" (Dr. O. W. Holmes) was in evidence with unfailing certainty even in areas beyond his own specialised learning, not to speak of the clear light this scholar, author and critic could shed on subjects with which he was *au fait*. One imagines that Sastry's "mind celebrates a little triumph every time it formulates a thought" as Emerson said; he is such an original thinker with a basically interpretative approach.

As Sri T. S. Parthasarathy, an equally erudite and well-known musicologist, observed when complimenting Sri Sastry on the conferment of the *biridu* "Sangita Kalarathna" on him, Sri Sastry is "one of the handful of really knowledgeable dance and music critics of India and has put Bangalore on the map of culture by being closely associated with such national bodies like the Sangita Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Akademy, NCPA etc. with a sense of complete commitment.

#### Innovative Planning

Sri Sastry's meticulous regard for planning was seen in the wide gamut of

the themes of the papers read at this Conference. Some of his ideas were very innovative e. g. the singing of the noted Karnataka musician Chikka Rama Rao's songs for invocation before the commencement of proceedings daily. A few of them like the pieces in Nata Raga "Veda Vinuthane" and in Vachaspati "Devphala gaurisha" were replete with raga bhava and melody.

#### A Broad spectrum

The various papers covered a broad spectrum - e. g. "Karnataka Musical Heritage" by Dr. R. Sathyanarayana, "Raga Rasa" by Dr. Padma Murthy, "Rare Suladis" by Tirumale Sisters, "Role of Violin in classical music" by Lalgudi Jayaraman, Pallavi Demonstration by Smt. M. L. V., "Mohana Raga" by Maharajapuram Santhanam, "Rutu Raga" (slide lecture) by Smt. Shyamala Bhava, "Haridasa Sangita" by Prof. L. S. Rajagopalacharya, "Laya Lavanya" by the Sri Umayalpuram Sivaraman, Adyar Lakshmanan and V. V. Subramanyam, Veena Seshanna's Thillanas by Dr. V. Doreswamy Iyengar, "Raga Vikasa" by Dr. Balamuralikrishna, a Santhoor display by Pandit OM Prakash Chaurasia, "Music of spirit worship" in Kerala by Balan Nambiar, "Karnatic music in Jazz" by Smt. R. A. Ramamani, "Role of language in classical music" by a group.

Not all of them clicked as sometimes happens in so ambitious an undertaking; but some of the presentations succeeded in imparting considerable enlightenment. Dr. Doreswamy Iyengar's rendering of Seshanna's Thillanas (warm and melodic), Sivaraman's perfect presentation of a complex Laya piece, Dr. M. L. V.'s complicated Pallavi demonstration, Lalgudi Jayaraman's skillfully persuasive talk proving that the Violin was a matchless

accompaniment for Carnatic vocal music and Sri T. S. Parthasarathy's scholarly exegesis of the true place of language in music amply supported by authorities like Jayadeva, Annamacharya, Margadarshi Seshalyengar etc. - all these stood out from the rest. The symposium on the "Future of classical music", a subject of great current interest, produced little that was stimulating. Had Sri Mohan Nadkarni, the noted critic and musicologist, been present, it might have been a different story.

#### Murali's Brilliance

But the palm should go to Dr. Balamurali Krishna's "Raga Vikasa" in which, with just a few swaras suggested *ad hoc* to him at random by Dr. Doreswamy Iyengar, he composed a beautiful Kriti and sang it also in a matter of minutes. We all know "Murali" revels in the accomplishment of the almost impossible, but on this occasion, his was an amazing display of musical cerebration and creative ability - melody, perfect craftsmanship and an instinctive poetic flair were well fused in the Kriti he evolved - so much so that one accepted capitulation to his mercurial genius with pleasure!

Painter Sri K. K. Hebbar's murals are world famous. He is an artist used to painting on a very broad canvas. It was not surprising that his valedictory address when conferring the "Sangita Kalaratna"

on Sri B. V. K. Sastry was long and a bit tenuous. His sketch of the relationship between music and painting, however, lent some colour and interest to his talk.

#### Gala Function

The investiture function had a gala atmosphere as was to be expected. Apart from the routine of citation, presentation of the *birudu* and some droll proceedings, there was one very commendable feature - one of the office-bearers read out a brief but succinct resume of the morning Conference discussions, so that even those who had not attended the sessions had a glimpse of what transpired. I have not come across so desirable a feature in other Conferences, not even in the prestigious meets. Gayana Samaja should be given a special pat on the back for this bit of considerateness towards art lovers.

The story of this magnificent drama would not be complete without a generous reference to the great team work put in by the several committees of the Samaja, whose members worked round the clock. All kudos not only to Sri Sastry but to Messrs. N. Nagaraja Rao, the President, Sarvashri B. N. Narain, Vice-President, M. K. Ramamurthy, a live-wire Secretary with unbounded energy, and his other colleagues.

Hearty Congratulations, Gayana Samaja!

K. S. Mahadevan.



## Cultural Scene in Karnataka

The Sept-Nov. quarter has been quite a hectic period in the cultural life of Bangalore. The major events, however, were the 14th Music conference and festival arranged by the oldest Sabha, the Bangalore Gayana Samaja, for eight days from 31-10-'82. The Academy of Music had arranged a cultural festival for 12 days from the 17th of November at the prestigious Chowdiah Memorial hall.

For the first time in these parts, a musicologist—Mr. B. V. K. Sastri was selected by the Samaja to preside over its conference and receive the title of 'Sankita Kalaratna'. This raised some eyebrows in music circles but Mr. Sastri more than vindicated his selection by the way he conducted the academic session in the mornings and the encouraging response he got from musicians. As President designate, he played a prominent role in forming an interesting agenda with an eye on highlighting the great contribution of Karnataka and its personalities in the music field. There were lectures, lecture-demonstrations and symposia.

Unlike as in the previous conferences, even the daily invocatory songs were those composed by composers of Karnataka, such as the late Chickarama Rao—the Guru of Mr. Sastri, Nijagunasivayogi, who had been familiarised to Madras Music Academy audiences by Mr. Sastri during a previous conference, Ratnakaravarni, Chiokupadyaya, Kanakadasa and Maharaja Krishnadevaraja Wodeyar III—all in Kannada. This was innovation enough. Sastri also played a recording of a song sung by his

guru Chickarama Rao, which gave a glimpse into the singing technique of a maestro of a previous generation.

Dr. R. Satyanarayana spoke about the 'Karnataka Musical heritage' and pointed out that many scholars belonging to the Karnataka region have written valuable treatises on music dance and, have contributed to the growth of Carnatic music over the centuries. He gave statistical details in support of this views

### Haridasa Sangita

Prof. L. S. Rajagopalacharya, a specialist in the study of the contribution of Haridasas of Karnataka to music, dwelt at length on the times in which the Haridasas lived and pointed out that their compositional output gained currency in rural parts, as they were wandering minstrels whose main object was the inculcation of the Bhakthi cult amongst the people at a time when the Muslim rule in India had wrought havoc amongst the people due to political uncertainty. He sang snatches of some songs (Dasara padas) which are being sung even to this day amongst the lay people in the western coastal region of Karnataka and drew the attention of the audience to the fact that the outlines of traditional ragas like Begade, Mohana, Kalyani, Bilahari, Anandabhairavi and Madhyamavathi could be traced in these tunes' renderings which have come down through Karna param-parai. He referred to the 'Battisa (32) ragas' mentioned by Purandaradasa, as indicative of those prevalent during his times.

### Pallavi demonstration

One of the highlights of the morning sessions was the variety in Pallavi singing very capably demonstrated by ladies. Dr. M. L. Vasanthakumari sang a eight-kala, pallavi in 'Bhairavi' with anuloma and pratiloma. Then Mrs. R. A. Ramani, a local artiste, presented an Avadhana pallavi in the Raga Bhairavi, maintaining Tisra tripata tala in Tisra nadai in one hand and Tisra Jhampai tala in Tisra nadai in another hand. This was followed by a multiple-tala pallavi by T. S. Satyavathi—also a local artiste, who rendered a pallavi in 'Kalyani' set to Chatusra tripata-Misra chapu Chatusra Eka and Khanda chapu talas in sequence. M. L. V. congratulated the two young ladies for breaking into the bastion of a male-dominated field successfully!

### Sugam Sangit

Another brain-child of Mr. Sastri was the presentation of the other forms of music which are part of our life today. First it was the folk music of Karnataka by a professional practitioner of what is known as 'Kamsale padaga u'. These generally refer to the exploits of certain rural deities with the refrain of the main singer being taken up by others in the group—typical of folk music. As a contrast came 'Sugam Sangit' (light music) rendered by a very popular artiste—Mysore Ananthaswami assisted by Ratnamala Prakash and Kasturi Shankar. He explained that the singers of 'Bhavageethas' (mood music) should enter into the mood of the song as envisaged by the poet and establish rapport with the audience and hence may have to use either system of music—Carnataki or Hindusthani. Vijaya Bhaskar, the reputed film music director, pointed out that in the very nature of things, the film tunes should appeal to the masses and hence may not be bound by

the technicalities of this or that system of music. Kasturi Shankar sang some songs.

### Fusion music

In the wake of her Aradhana pallavi rendering, Mrs. R. A. Ramamani displayed her versatility when she presented what may be called 'Fusion music' of Carnatic and Jazz musical systems. During 1980 she was drawn into the vortex of Jazz music at Calcutta and as a sequel, visiting American Jazz musician Maynard Ferguson persuaded her to participate in the Jazz India festival at Bombay which became a turning point in her life. Later when she travelled in Europe with the 'Tala Tarangini' troupe of her husband T. A. S. Mani, the wellknown mridangist of Bangalore, she experimented with a fusion of Indo-jazz music and composed a tune in the Carnatic raga Kuntalavarali set to the exciting jazz rhythm. Charlie Mariano, a marquee name in the world of Jazz/saxophone and some other Western instrumentalists joined her in the programme.

A recording of that programme was played by her at the morning session which brought out the thrilling charm of the vocalist as well as the bouncy rhythm of the quadruple-beat (Sarvalaghu). It captivated even the conservatives amongst the audience and left such a deep impression on them that it made one wonder about the future possibilities of Carnatic music at the hands of the younger generation of musicians, finding ready response from a younger generation of audience, whatever the diehards may have to say about it.

### New Raaga and Taala

Another landmark of the academic session was the presentation of a new raaga and taala by Dr. Balamuralikrishna

who was here for a professional engagement in the evening session. When he suggested to the audience that he was prepared to compose, on the spot in a song a new scale to be proposed by a member of the audience, Dr. V. Doreswamy Iyengar proposed a scale having a vakra sanchara in the Harikamboji mela (Sa-Ga-Ma-Pa-Ma-Da-Sa) in the ascent and (Sa-Ni-Da-Pa-Ma-Ga-Ri-Sa) in the descent. After a few minutes' deliberation Balamurali read the lyrics in Telugu of a song he composed. N. S. Lakshminarayana Bhatta, a popular Kannada poet, who was present amongst the audience, simultaneously composed equivalent lyrics in Kannada for the same tune. Balamurali not only commended his efforts but as a tribute, sang this song in both versions in his evening concert two days later. The Raaga was named 'Dorai' and the Taala 'Trimukhi' consisting of only laghus. It was quite an exciting experience for the audience.

#### Slide lectures

Kum. Syamala Bhave, a local musician well-versed in both the musical systems presented an audio-visual feature 'Rutu Raag'. She sang selections from Kalidasa's classic, 'Rutu Samhara', backed by screening some slides presenting scenes during the six seasons of the year. Balan Nambiar presented another slide-lecture in which he played and explained the music used in 'Bhoota Aradhane, (spirit worship) in Kerala.

#### Symposia

'Future of classical music' was the subject of a symposium in which three speakers presented their views. By and large it was agreed that classical music must develop an awareness of the needs of contemporary times and tastes so as not to get fossilised. In the other symposium on the 'Role of language in classical

music' it was agreed that while language does play its part in the musical enjoyment so far as Carnatic music is concerned, where 'Mathu (text) and Dhathu/melody both are reckoned as important, the importance given to language should not be at the cost of musical values.

#### Laya lavanya

Umayalpuram Sivaraman presented a very interesting and special feature 'Laya Lavanya' on the authority of an ancient treatise 'Sangita Chandrika' according to which there are 72 Melatalas based on the 72 Mela ragas. To illustrate this point he chose the 'Kharaharapriya mela and played on the mridangam 'Kharaharapriya mela tala with 24 matras, assisted by V. V. Subrahmanyam who played a tune on the violin and Adyar Lakshman keeping time with cymbals. This presentation also drew a record crowd.

#### Role of Violin

Lalgudi Jayaraman spoke at length about the role of violin in Carnatic music as an accompaniment and as a solo instrument. He pointed out that unlike the other Indian instruments which claimed divine association—flute with Lord Krishna, veena with goddess Saraswathi and mridangam with Nandikeswara, the violin, as now being used, is completely a western instrument. In fact he found Western musicians surprised at the wonderful use we in India have made of the violin, almost exhausting its possibilities. Dr. S. R. Siddalingappa, a violinist, who during his stay in Europe studied Western music, referred to the difference between fiddle and violin the former used in folk music and the latter in classical music—the use of a number of violins in western orchestra, some of them tuned to seven different

sthayis. He illustrated this by playing some recordings of Western orchestral music. He pointed out in conclusion that our classical musicians should not ignore such attempts and techniques if classical Carnatic music should continue to attract the younger generation as in any case it would have to.

#### Miscellaneous

Rudrappachar, a veteran veena maker of Mysore, spoke about the correct fretting of the veena. Dr. Padma Murthy spoke about the different rasas that different ragas are associated with and are said to evoke. Tirumale sisters sang some rare 'Sulaadis' collected from the manuscripts available in the Saraswathi Mahal library of Tanjore. Dr. V. Doreswami Iyengar played some rare thillanas of Veena Seshanna. Kumari B. Bhanumathi rendered a Kapi raga thillana of Seshanna in Bharathanatyam. Sexagenarian Shakuntala Bai Panduranga Rao, a veteran Gamaki, rendered some passages from Gadugina Bharatha in the 'Gamaka' Vaachana' style peculiar to Karnataka. Padma Gurudutt sang some Tyagaraja krithis which have been translated into Kannada retaining the "varnamettu".

As happens in such academic sessions the agenda each day was too overcrowded to permit either the speakers or the audience to participate effectively. Perhaps some items of a routine nature could have been omitted to give more time for the more interesting subjects. But by and large it was a stimulating Conference, as reflected in the large attendance seen at each session even on working days.

#### Lalgudi Honoured

The cultural festival to celebrate the second anniversary of the inauguration of

the Chowiah Memorial hall was preceded by the presentation of a cash award of Rs. 5,000/- and a shawl to Padmasri Lalgudi Jayaraman as the violinist of the year on an All-India basis. On this occasion, shawls were presented to three wellknown disciples of Chowdiah Viz. Vidwans R. K. Venkatarama Sastri, V. Seturamaiah and Kandadevi Alagiriswami, as also to Sri B. V. K. Sastri. On the concluding day Sri R. R. Kesavamurthi, one of the veteran violinists of Karnataka, received a cash award (State level) of Rs. 2,000/- and a shawl. Mr. K. K. Murthi also announced two scholarships of Rs. 250/- P.M. each for two years to the best mridangam student and a practitioner of the seven-stringed violin which Chowdiah had brought into vogue. The programme included music, dance, drama and Harikatha. Closed in T. V. arrangements enabled very large numbers comfortably seated in the surrounding lawns to witness the programmes. Admission to the auditorium was by invitation.

#### Veterans on the stage

Karnataka Sangit Nritya Academy held a three day festival during September to provide an opportunity for presenting some old timers on the concert stage. Naturally, this could not enthuse the audience used to a different and varied menu. Karnataka Nritya Kala Parishat held a three day third annual festival consisting of academic sessions and dance performances in the evening. Dr. K. Venkatalakshamma inaugurated it. T. S. Bhat, Vijaya Rao, Itai and Keshavamurthy spoke about 'Aharya and Abhinaya' in Bharathanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali and Yskshagana with Leela Ramanathan as the moderator. It was generally agreed that 'Aharya' has more relevance in Abhinaya in Yakshagana and Kathakali. In the sym-

posium on the role of cultural organisations in the development of performing arts, T. B. Narasimachar. Jayarama Rao, V. Subrahmanyam, H. R. Kesavamurthi, Leela Ramanathan spoke from the point of view of critics. Sri B. V. K. Sastri was the moderator. The evening programmes consisted of Bharathanatyam by B. Bhanumathi and Vatsala Bhat, Sandhya Rao (Kuchipudi) and Yakshagana by the members of the Bangalore Mahila Yakshagana Mandali. These were sponsored by the Departments of Kannada and Culture and Information and Publicity of the Karnataka Government.

The Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat also celebrated the tenth anniversary of its youth wing with a five-day meet during early October. It was inaugurated by the President of the Parishat and Dr. V. Dore-swami Iyengar presided over it. They were all sponsored by different institutions and consisted of two concerts per day of about 80 minutes' duration. There was also a seminar on 'Desya ragas' in which R. R. Kesavamurthi and A. Subba Rao participated.

#### Bombay Mysoreans Stage plays

The Mysore Association, Bombay's oldest organisation of Kannadigas settled in Bombay, has a Fine Arts Wing. Its members paid a visit to Bangalore and

staged three plays during November, at the Ravindra Kalakshetra. 'Bitti beladiddu' written and directed by Dr. Manjunath, 'Benda Kalooru' also by Dr. Manjunath and 'Koopu Mandooka' written and directed by Geetha Viswanath were all excellently produced and presented. These plays were sponsored by Natya Sangha, All India Ladies Association (Bangalore) and Karnataka Information and Publicity department. H. S. Srinivas, Ranganath, Usha Srikanth, C. G. A. Swami, K. Manjunath, Rama Venkatesh, Kum. Shrutha, Bharathi Prasad and Ratna Rao-all acquitted themselves creditably and won local hearts.

#### Vellore Ramabhadran Honoured

Sri Parthasarathy Music and Education Trust, Bangalore got up a function on 28-11-82 to felicitate Kalaimamani Vellore Ramabhadran and conferred on him the title 'LAYA VISHARADA'. Sri S. Y. Krishnaswamy (I.C.S.-Retd) presided over the function. Many speakers eulogised the talent of Sri Ramabhadran. Sri K. K. Murthi, President, Academy of Music, presented the awardee with a fine shawl and announced a monthly scholarship of Rs. 250/- for 2 years for the best student of mridangam to be selected by Ramabhadran.

T. B. NARASIMHACHAR.

#### ERRATA

In the article "The Nritya Vinoda of Manasollasa" appearing in the October 82 issue, the date in the 1st para on

page 49 should read as "1131 A.D." instead of "1151 A.D."

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Edited by K. S. Mahadevan, printed and published by R. V. Murthy for  
Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha, Bombay-400 022  
Printed at Rajan & Co. (Printers) 1, Goomes Street, Madras-600 001.  
Registered with Registrar of Newspapers for India No. R. N. 2793/875.

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